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THE WEST OF ENGLAND

AND

THE EXHIBITION,

1851,

BY HERBERT BYNG HALL, K.S.F.,

AUTHOR OF

"SCENES AT HOME AND ABROAD," "HIGHLAND SPORTS," "EXMOOR,"

ETC., ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF GRANVILLE,

&c., &c., &c.

My Lord,

May I be permitted to dedicate these simple pages to you? I do so that I laboured for a cause in which you have taken a most active and practical interest; moreover, with the full conviction that, high as your position, the great zeal and ability with which you have brought the energies of an endowed mind to bear on all things tending to the advancement of Industry and Art will raise you still higher in the estimation of the people of England and the World.

I have the honour to be,

Your faithful servant,

Herbert Byng Hall.

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INTRODUCTION.

"*Labor ipse voluptas.*"

THE title of this volume may lead many to suppose that it treats solely of matters connected with the Great Industrial Exhibition, the recent inauguration of which, by our gracious Sovereign, being the advent of just admiration which the voice of the nation has since awarded it. Such, however, is by no means the case.

Having had the honour to be selected by the Royal Commission to act as their representative for some of the Western Counties of England, to explain as far as might be in its early stages this vast and noble subject, as also to form committees and select honorary secretaries, and being an ardent lover of Nature, more particularly as regards the beauties of my native land, I took brief notes

of all I saw and all that gave me pleasurable interest by the way-side, adding slight rough sketches of those spots which more particularly delighted me. And thus holding, as I ever have, the opinion that even the mere memoranda of any man who travels, either at home or abroad, may contain some information and some interest,—the more so when those travels were taken with the endeavour to fight the battle of industry and prove the dignity of labour,—I would hope these pages may not prove void of amusement to those capable of justly estimating the land we live in.

I would apologise to many who have most kindly expressed their intention of purchasing this work, inasmuch as I have been induced from circumstances over which I had no control, as from some unavoidable delays, to reduce to one volume that which I had promised them in two; and my only hope is they will not exclaim, "Truly one is enough."

The district allotted to me, as representing the Royal Commission appointed by Her Majesty to promote the interests of the Exhibition of 1851,

included the counties of Somerset and Wilts, a portion of Dorsetshire and Devon. In the performance of those duties, I held public meetings, formed local committees, and selected local honorary secretaries, at the following towns:—

Bridgwater;	Poole;
Bath;	Sidmouth;
Crewkerne;	Salisbury;
Dartmouth;	Taunton;
Devizes;	Totnes;
Exeter;	Wells;
Frome;	Wareham;
Glastonbury;	Wellington;
Marlborough;	Yeovil.
Malmesbury;	

I also visited Chippenham, Torquay, Warminster, and others, on a subject now so universally applauded; then to many one of positive objection and dislike. Never shall I regret, however, notwithstanding some difficulties, that I laboured in a cause which I trust, under God, may prove beneficial to mankind.

Throughout my district, which may be termed almost entirely agricultural, there were only two towns of any importance where meetings were not held—the one Torquay, the other Chippenham. At the former, with a chief magistrate anxious himself to promote the interests of the Exhibition, and boasting of one of the finest marble quarries in the world, it has ever been a source of astonishment that the subject should have been rejected; whereas I can fully account for cheese and corn being the only acceptable exhibition at Chippenham.

To one and all who aided me in my duties and tendered me hospitalities, I avail myself of this opportunity to assure them of my gratitude.

CHAPTER I.

"What do you propose for the summer, friend Clifford? Are you off, as usual when the London season closes, for Switzerland or Italy, France, Holland, Germany, or Russia?—for well I know your habits. Certain as the swallow you migrate when white bait ceases to be the joy of *gourmands*; that is, when Ministers have discussed their annual feast, and grouse, no longer permitted to live in peace, take wing from their perfumed heather resting-places at the sound of the sportsman's footstep. 'Tis then you also stretch forth your golden-plumed pinions and fly, as fast as the mighty power of steam or four post-horses will enable you, to the uttermost part of the earth, so that earth be not glorified by the name of Old England,—it mattereth little whither."

"You are perfectly correct in your remarks, Linton,—perfectly so. Englishmen imbibe, I fancy, a spirit of restlessness from their birth. Emancipated from the cradle, they desire to wander; and as young ducks hatched under the tender care of a hen, no sooner have they power than they go forth into the stream of life. Such is the nature of islanders. Freed from nursery thraldom, they desire to see the world. The very fact of our being cut off from the Continent of Europe by a wide salt water brook, ofttimes all but impassable, adds to our anxious wish to make the attempt, that we may peep into the secrets of our Continental neighbours. And I by no means find fault with this rambling propensity, Linton. There is much to see, still more to learn, beyond the white cliffs of '*perfide Albion*,' than you or I wot of. There are skies of cobalt blue, and suns of golden hue, and harvest moons bright and refulgent, and mountains of grand outline with snow-capped summits even in Midsummer time, and vast rich plains, and proud cities, and gilded-crested monuments, and all that can delight the eye or gratify the senses—beautiful to look on, and pleasant as an abiding-place. I repeat, 'tis well to journey in foreign lands, though beauteous is our own."

"And I admit the truth and justice of all you

have advanced, Clifford. Permit me, however, to ask you if all and more of the pleasures and advantages you have named are not to be found in this truly glorious, peaceful and merry England. Yes, yes, indeed, there are cities which delight the beholder; mountains, if not so lofty yet as worthy of admiration as the Alps or the Pyrenees; and though comparisons may be odious, I say there are mountains in the United Kingdom—Ben Lomond, for instance, with its unequalled lake scenery, our own splendid mountains and lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland—that have charms and grand outlines, which I at least love to look on, with as much pride and equal interest to those of Mont Blanc and Lake Leman or any other mountain or lake scenery on the wide Continent of Europe. My object, however, is not to disparage the homes of my neighbours, but to assert that this comparatively small track of island land boasting (and well it may boast) of the proud name of England possesses Nature's charms, spread here and there from North to South, East and West, which are allowed to remain ever unsought and totally unknown, save to those who dwell amid their beauties, while scarce an Eton or a Westminster boy but can chatter by the hour of the beauties of the eternal Rhine, the glorious palaces of Milan,

Naples or Vienna, the refined society and unquestionable gourmandising of Paris, or even of a sledge party at St. Petersburg. I say, Clifford, in all courtesy to your acknowledged John Bullism on general occasions, that you are notwithstanding wanting in a little common sense; and I am sure, when I speak without intentional discourtesy, you will agree with me that, were a trifle of that abundance which is yearly lavished on foreign lacqueys and foreign gewgaws, couriers and restaurants, distributed throughout such portions of this fair land, our native home, as are worthy and far more worthy than any portion of France at least of being visited, much good would accrue, much poverty be relieved, in exchange for untold gratification. Would for once I could hear that the Great Western Railway had conveyed some hundreds of Right Honourable Peers and some thousands of British Commoners to the lovely vales of Devon, the luxuriant gardens of Somerset, Gloucestershire or Herefordshire, instead of the Folkestone steamers being laden weekly with visitors to that receptacle of knavery, Boulogne, or that fish-smelling and dullest of all dull towns, Calais. Would that the North-Western were as overladen with ramblers to the Northern lakes when the Autumn time arrives as it is when conveying turkeys and geese at Christmas time for

metropolitan festivities; that sportsmen should fly to the highlands of Scotland, there for a few short months to enjoy the shooting of grouse or the stalking of red deer or the delights of landing a fine salmon! I by no means question they partake of a delightful and healthy recreation in the land of our brothers and dispense their money in the United Kingdom, while we at home share also in their pleasures, though gastronomically, by eating of their spoils. Neither do I dispute the tastes of those who cross the rough waters of the Irish sea, to look on the green hills of Erin. Would there were many, many more lovers of fine scenery, who now are wont to seek it yearly in foreign lands, who would be induced to visit a few of those lovely spots washed by the waters of the Western ocean, and leave behind them some score pounds of that wealth so lavishly squandered on the Continent! Believe me, rebellion would be less ripe, misery less appalling and gratitude more freely accorded, as the name of Englishmen more fully beloved. Yes, Clifford, noble as our country's charity, generous in nature and bountiful when called on to all who appeal in want, we scatter at times unadvisably, oftimes sinfully and selfishly, to pamper foreign humbug, enrich foreign art, lighten foreign hearts; while talent, equal if not far superior, lives in the garrets of

England, art languishes for want of some little aid or support, and beggary and starvation are the lot of thousands who well deserve and would be made rich even by the odd pence thrown away on Continental fooleries. Let me not say too much, however, or you will judge me a home-sick enthusiast, or worse, a vile calumniator. I will then solely add that there are thousands of my countrymen who have been in the habit of hastening to the Continent in order to economise. Now, save as regards those who merely require time to free themselves from embarrassments without running the risk and ruin of severe law expenses ad interim, and the still more severe heart-achings which they produce, or those who have been in the habit of keeping up large establishments and who have been proportionally lavish in their hospitality, I deny that any economy is to be enjoyed in foreign lands which cannot equally be obtained in many charming spots in this fair country for those who will seek them; and when such have the courage and the honesty manfully and truly to economise, they would find themselves surrounded with comforts the Continent cannot offer them, and the limited means they circulate would benefit their brothers of the same land. Nevertheless, as I have already asserted, Clifford, there are undoubted advantages in foreign lands;

and more—no young man who has means at command and a position in life to support but should add to the catalogue of his education a knowledge of foreign countries and foreign languages. Yet, seeking these advantages, let him not forget—what tens of thousands do forget—the charms of this, the land we live in. Go by all means to the East or the West, to the North or the South. Visit the burning plains of Egypt, or the frozen rivers of Russia. Go wheresoever pleasure or curiosity may lead you. But visit also your native land. Then, if your heart feel fairly and your lips speak truly, you will confess that there is "no place like home." I am about to visit the Western counties of "Merrie England." The memory of foreign scenes will only enhance your pleasure at the pride of beholding native ones. Come with me."

"Well, well, Linton, I admit there is much truth in your assertions; and having myself discussed a *poulet aux truffles*, and an unrivalled potage in days lang syne at Beauvillier's, whose artist, by the bye, out-Soyeed Soyér and ran a dead heat with Oude for the Coulet stakes; drank champaigne in the capital of Russia, where it is swallowed by hogsheads; actually enjoyed hot tea and butter toast with the thermometer at 93 at Palermo, to

gratify the taste and feelings of a fat purser of a line-of-battle-ship, who declared there was nothing half so refreshing, even in the Dog Days. In fact, having done all and seen all that most Englishmen have done and have seen on the Continent of Europe—moreover, not having the slightest interest in the national taste of Frenchmen for triennial revolutions la gloire and fraternisation, I will even, as you desire it, keep my head on my shoulders and my crowns in my pocket for the benefit of my fellow-countrymen. So select your route, pack up your requirements, and let us start to the land of the West, or the land of the North,—whithersoever you will it; for the season advances, and to remain in the capital of mighty England in these early days of Summer, the hottest of the year, causes me to lose somewhat of my good condition, and with it my good temper."

"Agreed, then, let us be off to morrow; to night if you are prepared, that we may be waking with the Sun and listen to the woodland songsters far from this mighty city."

"No, no; not quite so hasty as all that. Your idea is sufficiently poetical, but I must remain one more night within hail of Belgravia; and as for the woodland songsters, the sparrows on yon house-top must suffice for an accompaniment to the morning's

meal; moreover I have promised to join a party to Billingsgate. Perchance you have been there. Four courses of the best of fish, and a leg of Southdown, for one and sixpence! The above excellencies ratified by a bottle of Claret, at the chambers of a Q. C."

"Be it so. Then to-morrow let us meet at the Paddington station, and I will take you to cities which cannot be surpassed in beauty of building or sublimity of situation on the Continent of Europe; rivers that flow towards the wide ocean; unrivalled landscapes, that the eye shall rest on again and again with unwearied and undimished admiration; fields more rich in green pasture and woodlands more luxuriant in foliage than God has granted to any other nation in the world; and as I well know you are not the man fully to enjoy all these beauties of Nature without some attention to the gratification of the body as well as the mind, though I should do you much injustice did I not declare that with all your foreign habits you have never yet attained to the gastronomic powers either of a Frenchman or a German, and as to French women it would indeed be a revolution which deprived them of their gourmandising glory,—nevertheless you shall be well provided with salmon fresh and crimped from the river Severn, eels from the river Tone,

mutton from the delightful downs of Dartmoor, lobsters from that lovely Bay called Babbicombe, and creamy turbot from the deep blue ocean at Torbay. See what is promised you! and this in merry England—the land we live in! So for the present adieu. While you are feasting at Billingsgate, your trusty follower will look to your belongings, and I shall prepare myself for the line of march."

CHAPTER II.

The morrow dawned in all the splendour of an early day of Summer, and as we rapidly steamed far away from the great Babylon all was bright, cheerful and beautiful. The corn, already slightly tinged with a golden hue, told of the coming harvest, while the ripening fruit hung in clusters on the orchard trees as we glided rapidly onwards, mile after mile only more and more unfolding the beauties and treasures of a county peculiar to England, and as superior to *La Belle France* or the flat plains of Holland—resorts of Englishmen —as is a garden bedecked with the choicest flowers to an arid desert.

"Ah well, this is truly a fine well-cultivated country," said Clifford; "charming! I declare.

How beautifully the river winds through those rich woodlands! It reminds me of some place on the Continent."

"That may be, but it is far more beautiful nevertheless," I replied.

"If you speak truly, not exactly that; but let me recollect—where was it? Well, never mind, it is really charming."

Thus onwards we flew. I shall not, however, dwell on that portion of our route passed over while we sat most comfortably reclining in a first-class carriage of the Great Western Railway. There are thousands and tens of thousands who have every mile of it in their mind's eye, and they might in reason declare that such descriptions were somewhat tame, should chance cause them to read these pages.

Our first point of halting (for I had so arranged our travels) was at a small and humble yet pretty station named Corsham.

ANCIENT SEAL OF CORSHAM.

Corsham is nevertheless a place of some importance, and I would observe, for those unacquainted with its local, that it is situated within half a mile of that horrid bore known as the Box tunnel, the mausoleum of engineering folly; nevertheless, a convincing specimen of the effects of money and labour. Corsham, the support of this station, is a small market town of Wiltshire, whose chief attraction is its perfect tranquillity and its excellent bacon; its boast, the immediate vicinity of the extensive and finely-wooded park of Lord Methuen, whose noble mansion, once filled with rare and fine paintings, to a sight of which the public were freely and kindly admitted, thus attracting thousands annually from the neighbouring cities of Bath and Bristol. The mansion of late years, however, has undergone and is in fact now undergoing extensive additions; and if finished, which I trust it may be, it will form another of those splendid homes of the English aristocracy with which no other country has ever attempted to compete. And happy ought the possessors of such homes to be who, residing in them as they ought to do for two-thirds of the year, can look forth on their broad rich acres and wide-spreading woodlands, and blessing God, who has been to them so bountiful, can feel that their joys and comforts are propor-

tionally felt and shared by those who labour for the bread of life on those wide lands, where numerous human beings dwell who look up to them for succour and support, loving them in proportion to their acts of justice and kindness as their earthly masters and benefactors. Such ought at least to be their position, if it be not; and it would bring with it much cause for rejoicing and untold joy. Comparatively secluded and unimportant as Corsham may be, however, in the days we live, it was far otherwise in those of our ancestors, when Royalty claimed its manorial rights and granted privileges happily defunct—the one, by far the most peculiar, placing the vicar for the time being on the judgment seat of life and death; indeed I was informed by the courteous gentleman who now receives the vicarial tythes, that he still possesses in right of his position the very uncommon privilege of granting marriage licences and proving wills throughout the extensive boundaries of his parish.

But my friend Clifford remarks that the train we have just left is now entering the Box Tunnel. A loud discordant shrieking whistle proclaims this fact; and the hissing, spluttering engine with its long pendant line of carriages disappears beneath the bowels of the earth, burying as it were more than a hundred living souls. No sooner has it entered

than the very aperture appears to be partially closed, so small, so insignificant is the passage to our sight. They are gone!—buried alive in fact for the time being, to re-appear again with an arrow's flight, through many a sunny smiling vale, near many a crowded town and city!

THE BOX TUNNEL.

How varied doubtless are the thoughts and sensations of those reasoning beings thus speeding onwards! How different are the feelings and pulsations of each throbbing heart! How many, perhaps not one —and yet I would fain hope it among that motley

assemblage—whose hearts beat with sentiments of unalloyed joy or calm happiness! There may be one, perchance, among the number hastening to meet a heart responding entirely with his or her own—one who leaves no pang behind, but looks forward to his journey's end for nought but gladness—one who can honestly and truly say "I am at peace with God and man, and now after long absence I hasten to rest my joyous head on the fond bosom so dear to me and to whom I am so dear." No care, not even the slightest fear that the fulness of his imaginative gladness will be marred, denotes itself on his sunny and intelligent countenance. No, he journeys in peace and joy. May these hopes be realised on his arrival! Pray God they may! Yet perhaps they will not. Some slight, yet totally unlooked for and unexpected cause may interrupt the even current of his happiness. If not, that man indeed is blessed. Others journey onwards intent on the pleasures of the day—such pleasures as those may hope to enjoy who look not beyond the hour. Others are intent on business, money-making, merchandise and markets. Those boys who sit within the train—watch their sad faces. Surely sorrow has not already cast her shadows on their young hearts; and yet tears fill those eyes where

laughter and frolic should only find place. Their holidays are over, they return to school. Their tears are but as an April shower. All will be fair again to-morrow. But look yonder, within that first-class carriage, and see a young fair widow, so delicate, so refined, so intellectual in her countenance; and watch the beauteous child, whose fair long golden ringlets cluster over the arm which so fondly encircles her cherub neck. How that youthful and graceful woman appears to doat on the being whom God has spared to her! Make it not your idol, sweet one, or God may judge fit to take her also. How deep is the anguish marked on her pale and thoughtful countenance! She goes—who knows where? Perhaps far from the ashes of him who was her life. In the very next carriage sits one, how widely different in appearance!—a bloated, self-satisfied—at least by his demeanour you read it so—a self-satisfied and selfish speculator, a man who has just left the money market, a man who has made some lucky speculations. He looks well-pleased and comfortable. He has reason for the time. To-morrow, such being his pursuit, he may fall. Thousands have before and will again. Near to him are three young men in the sunshine of life, blessed with health, youth and appearance. They laugh, they talk incessantly; they joke. They are

bent on a visit to some out-door festival about to take place near the fair city of the West, and thence to Goodwood races. May they ever be joyous as they now appear to be! In the same carriage with this hilarious party and that self-satisfied and over-wealthy man also sits one whose every appearance stamps him as a man of birth, courtesy and intellect; for the eye, though thoughtful and sad, yet beams with intelligence and speaks of a mild disposition, warm heart and honourable character. Yet on every lineament of his features is marked depression, disappointed hopes and heart-ache. This man has been to London, possessed of what the world believes to be powerful influence, talent and every requisite to serve the public with advantage. Year after year elapses, and he seeks employment in vain, while chance or money, all-powerful money, or some dark scheme of policy, felt but unseen by the world, such as a waverer to be gained over or an agitator to be calmed each week, places in power and place those who have neither half his claims or a tithe of his abilities, nor one single grain of right to that which nevertheless they obtain while he starves. This man, I say, returns broken-hearted from London. He has, by incurring an expense he can ill afford, obtained an interview with some man in power and high

position, his equal in birth, perhaps his inferior in mind, who has repeated for the twentieth time his promise of assistance, and has at least left to him hope, that cheering star of life in the distance—hope such as the widow has—

> "Where the wretched cease from troubling,
> And the weary are at rest."

There then let him rest his heart—not on the promises of man. Such probably would be true pictures of many who daily travel from North to South, East and West, shut up in steaming trains, could we read their hearts. But our train is lost to view. God be with all it contains! Clifford, our carriage awaits. So let us onward to Castle Combe.

CHAPTER III.

The road from the quiet inland town of Corsham to the truly romantic village of Castle Combe offers but slight attractions. Nevertheless, could the mind divest itself of the apparent unrural appearance of the stone-roofed houses peculiar to Wiltshire and the neighbourhood of the queen of Western cities, Bath, which convey from eye to heart a feeling unpleasing and harsh, so unlooked for in the country, there remain considerable beauty of landscape and much fine timber. In fact, take it altogether, it is far from being an unpleasing drive to him who is a true lover of Nature in every form; and, as Clifford frankly pronounced it to be, really more interesting than a league of French avenue, with acre on acre of fallow land, without tree or hedge-row to

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soften or break the monotony of the scene. I felt the more gratified myself, inasmuch as I well knew the termination of our drive would open to him a picture of dell and wood which would repay most men, though they might have travelled far and fasted long to watch the setting sun sink behind the woodlands and then went supperless to bed. Not that my corpulent friend had any such misfortune in the distance, though forsooth the first time my wandering propensities led me to that punch-bowl of luxuriant alder trees and trout preserves, if in reference to supper I had no reason to complain, I was well nigh condemned to a strange bed; for having requested one at that which appeared to me to be the only tolerable little hostelry in the place, much fatigued I entered the small clean apartment allotted to me, when, as is my custom, I proceeded to inspect the covering and ascertain that the sheets had been well aired previous to making that agreeable plunge into its downy centre, where care, joy and fatigue are soon drowned in sleep's oblivion, when lo! before I made the final jump I perceived that the good woman, my landlady, had so arranged my bed that although I was permitted to stretch my tired limbs on a rough blanket, one sheet alone was allowed me above. Now a personal contact with flannel in one's natural

state has always been my detestation, and save in fancy I could never endure it. Therefore with some difficulty I succeeded in summoning the good woman in her under garments (more flannel) to my assistance, and having duly explained, requested that, her stock of linen permitting, she would allow me to rest on a sheet as well as a sheet to cover me; with which request she immediately complied. Nevertheless the old woman gave me clearly to understand that the Squire at the lower or great house, and the Doctor in the upper house, and the Parson in the new house, were the only three happy individuals in the whole parish who ever dreamt of such luxuries, much less dreamt on such luxuries as sheets. She then requested my name, which I told her; and it is possible, like those of the boys who get first into college at Westminster, that it even appears on the parish registrar in golden letters beneath the distinguished characters above-named. For this rest I was charged ninepence; and having given a shilling, doubtless left a good impression of my generosity and courtesy on the good woman's memory.

But we now emerge from a somewhat rough and lengthened lane, after mounting a steep ascent, which ran along the crest of a hill, opening on the one side a pleasing view of a rich and sheltered

valley; on the other, distant yet grand outlines of hills which mark the horizon beyond the river Severn. This lane terminated, we pass through a gateway, and halt on a little knoll or open down land; and looking almost Northward behold, as it were about half a mile or somewhat more below us, the spire and steeple of a village church, around and near to which the little cluster of houses seem to nestle for protection; the whole surrounded and as it were embosomed by high and woodland hills rising on all sides, as if Nature had so placed them as a kind of barrier against intrusion and intruders, whether coming in the shape of keen winter's blasts, or in that of man, from the great world so near at hand, and yet, when looking on this peaceful scene, almost to be forgotten. A few brief hours since we had driven through the thronged and busy streets of the tumultuous capital of the most mighty nation of the world. Scarcely an hour had elapsed ere we had quitted some scores of fellow travellers, and now without a living being in sight were contemplating a scene quiet as the grave, yet so grand and beautiful that Nature seemed to hold one's every feeling and thought in awe and admiration of her works. The mighty sun with rays of gold glanced across the woodlands and settled like a blaze of fire on the gilded spire of the church,

ere sinking to rest behind the Western forest, and leaving the tree-clad vale in the soft repose of coming twilight; and I turned to Clifford, who was silently admiring the scene before us, and said, "Switzerland has many and rare beauties of Nature, many spots that far surpass what we now behold in wildness and romance; yet I question if the Pay de Vaud can produce one where the woodlands are so glorious in luxuriant foliage, or where the nightingale hallows the night with such continued strains of its melodious music."

"You say truly; it is indeed beautiful."

While we gradually descend into the heart of this secluded vale, I may name that our reasons for having thus diverged from our intended route southwards were twofold. One, that my friend Clifford might be plunged as it were at once from civilization into ruralization—a contrast which often produces most pleasing effects; and I could scarcely have selected a more fitting one than that from Curson St. May Fair to this tree-clad seclusion—a seclusion made beautiful by God and by no means neglected by the hand of man. In addition, I was desirous to see, that which hitherto I had never seen in the garb of Summer—the park grounds of one over whose days of boyhood are cast such charming recollections in that

most clever and fascinating work entitled "Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing," the sequel to one of even greater merit, and to me of greater interest, entitled "Deer-Stalking in the Highlands of Scotland," both from the pen of W. Scrope, Esq. And now I behold the land which owned him as its master. Need I add that the family of Scrope have held possession of this romantic spot for several centuries, and still claim woodland, mead and river as their own?

The picturesque and modernised residence of Paulet Scrope, Esq., M.P., stands in a position which when brightened by the rays of a glorious summer sun would be termed by the stranger who rambles to the locality one of peculiar interest and beauty. When the trees are leafless, and the snow of winter hangs on the low lands and covers the surrounding woods as were they sugared, I should imagine the interest almost equalled from the very desolation and peculiarity of the scene. At one of the extremities of an almost oval flat park, through which in varied curves a small clear river runs, termed the Box brook, well filled with high-flavoured and speckled trout, (and wherein the talented author we have named commenced his piscatorial education, the pleasures of which he still enjoys though having passed the allotted life of man,) stands the by no means extensive mansion of Castle Combe.

The original building, which appears to have been added to and modernised from time to time, fronts the south, its only prospect being across the narrow park to the woodlands which adorn the opposite hills. In fact, the whole place may be described as follows:—A beautiful and luxuriant oval mead or park, about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth, through which the stream glides as a serpent, the whole being inclosed by high hills covered to their summits with fine old trees, the alders in particular, which are numerous in the low ground, being remarkable for their size, beauty of form and luxuriance of growth. On the northern extremity of one of these wood-clad hills stands a comparatively modern turret or castle,—on the spot, I presume, where in days lang syne resided the ancient Barons of Scrope, or Combe, wont to live in despotism and rude hospitality and hold their own; and doubtless from thence the term Castle Combe is now derived. Be this as it may, if report speaks truly, the kindness of the present lord of the domain admits of much hospitality being there dispensed, without the despotism, in this our blessed reign of Queen Victoria; for when the Summer time arrives and the nightingale once more charms the night with its delicious notes, many and many a pic-nic party from far and wide and all the country round are wont to spread their dainties beneath the

shade of the old oaks which surround this intended monument of ancient days and feudalism. The chicken-bones and long corks which lay scattered on all sides, at midsummer time at least, speak plainly of hospitality and good cheer; and as the descent from this favourite spot of out-door feasting is steep and slippery, I will vouch for the fun and merriment, to say nothing of the disasters, when lads and lasses meet in festive glee, and are well prepared, the aristocracy with champagne and the farmocracy with double X, for sport under the greenwood tree. In proof of my assertion, as we stood on the side of that pleasant spot fully admiring the beauty of the scene, I could not help repeating some few words from a French vaudeville which ran thus:—

> "Il est plus dangereux de glicer,
> Sur le gazon que la glace;"

which I had scarcely uttered when, either from laughing or some other cause, the foot of my agreeable but somewhat corpulent companion did slip, and he rolled or rather slid some fifty feet below the point where we had stood, being at length brought up by a tree and safely anchored; otherwise he might perchance have disturbed the trout by floundering in the brook below, in which preserved abundance they were enjoying themselves. To the

east of the house, and almost immediately connected with it by a flight of stone steps, is a small but charming summer garden, whence, standing on its highest portion, you command a view of the whole wood-encircled park; and, peeping from beneath the trees, a portion of the church turret and spire lift their picturesque forms from amid the thick green foliage, offering a charming and additional object of beauty to the silence, and, I may almost add, solemnity of the scene.

To him who, standing on the southern bank of the stream, looks towards this garden when the flowers are in the fulness and multiplicity of their bright summer suits, it is truly like a scene of fairy land; and I have never ascertained that any stranger who asks in courtesy has been refused admittance to this truly interesting and peaceful spot—one of the least of the thousands to be seen in merry England. The walnut trees alone, being some of the finest ever beheld, are worthy of a visit; and well can I believe that when the white and pink thorn trees which abound on the Castle Hill, and are scattered elsewhere in the woodlands, of great size and profusion, are in the fulness of their bloom, it must be well worthy a trip even from the great Babylon for a few hours' walk amid such fragrant luxuriance thus bountifully supplied by

Nature's unsparing hand. And yet how many hundreds, aye, how many thousands, are there who yearly leave their pleasant homes, even in the magnificent city of Bath, within one hour's pleasant drive of this fair scene, and equal numbers both from Bristol and its neighbouring Clifton, within two hours' ride, who go forth, I say, from their delightful abiding-places to scatter wealth, and idle through many a bright long summer's day, either at that Anglo-fraternising place, Boulogne, or still more uncongenial town called Dieppe, where the fresh breezes of the sea literally succumb to the foul stench of stale fish. Yet these, and such as these, talk of having summered on the Continent, as had they visited half the capitals of Europe, and enjoyed the hospitality of half the crowned heads, or heads still left with crowns, in the world. They speak, with sorrow do I say it, of the charms of the Continent—their charm being Boulogne; and yet are they scarcely aware, having never imagined there was aught worthy of a visit in their own country, that within twelve miles or four leagues of them (for probably they prefer the league better,) there is some of the finest scenery in the world. And being aware of this fact, what mattereth it to them? The one is in Old England, the land we live in—the land where every man can speak his mind freely and fearlessly, if honestly

—the land where a man may live in the woodlands with his hall-door open, and do aught that man desire to do, so that he obey the law. The other is beyond the white cliffs of *perfide Albion*, in *La Belle France*—the country of *gloire*, fraternity and passports—abroad, on the Continent. I fancy, while memory brings me back to the many beauteous spots of dear England, (which hereafter I shall endeavour to sketch with my pen,) that I recline half dosing in my elbow chair and hear the following words :—"Oh, dear Mamma, let us, do let us, go abroad this summer, to sweet, dear, darling, delightful Boulogne. Only think of that dear, amusing Adolphus Ernest Joinville Mellier de Quequovillien. What cheering, delicious sentiments he expressed! Do you recollect, dearest Ma', when he stood with his hand on his manly breast under the monument erected to commemorate the capture of England by Napoleon, and exclaimed, 'You behold, fair ladies, La Belle France, the country of de glory and de fraternity; and dare, in de distance, is de little spot, your England—de nation of shopkeepers?'" By St. Hubert (but I never swear) it positively makes me irritable to think that such frivolity can be admitted in such a glorious country as this, deserted as are its beauties for such Foreign pig-sties.

But let me endeavour to forget it if I can, for we

are now driving into the little village of Combe. On our right, its lawn watered by a trout stream, stands the modern residence of the clergyman—the very spot of spots for a christian pastor's bivouack, for if he find not peace amid such rural beauty and solitude, and teach it not to others, better try another, as I have done, on the banks of the Ebro, in mid-winter's snow, and he would find the change somewhat in his favour at this snuggery of Combe. But these reverend gentlemen have good taste both in the selection as in the adornment of their abiding-places; indeed, barring the lord of the castle or the Squire of the mansion, their abode—as it ought to be if deserving—is generally the best in a village; and as we drove by, his Reverence—probably a future Very or Right Reverend—appeared to be employed in the harmless occupation of budding rose trees.

Knowing the bold Baron of Combe to be absent from his luxurious abode hard by in the oval park, we had half a mind to sound a halt and beat up his quarters; but my fat friend had some peculiar notions in reference to religious opinions, and I did not know how far the good rector, though his appearance was benevolent and hospitable, would be prepared to entertain two such hungry wanderers as we were. Moreover, the days of

monks, monasteries and refectories and fat abbots are passed and gone from the land,* and no longer do our priests glory in fat venison from their parks, game from their preserves, or fish from their streams. They prefer some solid golden tithes, with which they go to market. And with this consolation we passed onwards, approaching a spot where once, I should imagine, the produce of the farm-yard changed hands weekly to supply the neighbouring marts of Bath and Bristol, and the prices of corn and cattle, for which the counties of Wilts and Gloucester are celebrated, were duly discussed. Be it as it may, a market-place it was, and apparently a market-place it still remains, situated in the very centre of the little village, in a position of no common beauty and adorned by an ancient cross, worthy a distant morning's drive to gaze upon. And yet 'tis strange that he who is lord and master of the surrounding woodlands and rich vale land which encircle the peaceful habitations which appear to have fallen as from the sky, to nestle side by side amid these romantic hills,—a man of admitted taste and talent, with a voice ever heard in the British Legislature as an advocate for civilization—in fact, the poor man's friend, as in mind a companion endowed with unusual

* Would that Nunneries and Agapemonæ were also.

powers—should almost daily, when at home, pass by this monument of olden days, and not long since have prevented the desecration of its beauties; for destroyed are they by the vile stone roof which, apparently in recent times, has been built around it, affording unquestionable shelter to the passer-by from the mid-day storm, yet other advantage it would be difficult to ascertain, save it be that the idlers of the village there congregate during the summer's evening for the sole purpose of smoking their pipes and scandalizing the few passers-by; while on the Sabbath, being in the immediate vicinity of the church, from sunrise to sunset, save during the hours of divine service, it is the lounge of the idler. Take down the roof, say I; in fact I could with difficulty prevent my friend from commencing, inasmuch as the interior reminded him of some foreign monument, which he declared would have been a beautiful fountain instead of an elegant cross in any other country but dear Old England. At all events, I fully agreed with him that the roof, the hideous roof, by which it was covered, at least two-thirds of it resting on stone pillars, the interior forming a small market-place and receptacle for stocks, had only the object of hiding a beautiful specimen of ancient architecture.

As, however, we intended more closely to inspect this relic and others on the morrow, and were becoming somewhat desirous both for rest and food, having fasted through a long day, I turned to a rustic who lingered near the spot narrowly scrutinising the strangers, and solicited information as to the residence of a youthful member of that useful profession who are daily advancing in science and enlightenment—indeed of all men, his Reverence perhaps excepted, the most necessary to a country community; for while the latter labours to save souls, the former gains often but a slender income in endeavouring to save bodies. I speak of course in reference to those who really do their duty towards God and man. Their success must naturally be derived in proportion to their zeal and abilities. I had known the scientific practitioner to whom I allude some years previously, in London. He was then studying the anatomy of the body—that is, attaining skill in the dissection of the human form defunct—while I, equally well employed, was learning the use of arms to dissect the human form in life. In fact, my friend was a doctor, as I a soldier. The few evenings I had passed in his society were sufficient to convince me that, notwithstanding much gentleness of manner and brevity of speech, his heart was glowing with the milk of human kindness,

and he required only to be known to be esteemed by his friends and to make due progress in the profession he had selected, and for which he evinced considerable talent. In addition to his manner being courteous and pleasing, it was equally quaint; and I felt convinced I had only to bring my social friends together in order to obtain an agreeable evening, as well as much information in reference to the place where he had recently established himself in practice, as also, in the absence of larger, I will not say better, accommodation, with the horrors of a blanket in my recollection, to secure a kind reception and good cheer. Add to this, not many months prior to the period we found ourselves at Combe, I had met my medical friend hurrying through the streets of Bath. The day was sultry, and we evidently both felt fatigue and thirst; so, having warmly greeted me, he added in a very few words, "I am engaged for an hour in reference to some matters of business, but if you are not leaving the city pray meet me at the Lamb and let us have some luncheon." "Agreed," said I, "Lamb and Luncheon with all my heart, or Luncheon and Lamb;" and so we parted to meet again—why precisely at the Lamb, however, I knew not, for although doubtless a most excellent hostelry, as I afterwards found to be the case, it was not

among those with which as regards Bath my ears were familiar.*

To the Lamb, however, I proceeded at the appointed time, and there I found my friend. "Now," said he, "I have brought you to the Lamb for this good reason, that the landlord brews the best ale in the West of England, which is saying much, for the best ale in the West of England is the very best beverage. A man who is tired and thirsty, as I am and you appear to be, can drink between the hours of twelve and two, decidedly the period when our ancestors were wont to feast and digest. Happily for man, however, and modern men above all, the six-league boots of civilisation have made rapid strides, and consequently the good people of the days we live in have converted their great-grandpapa's dinners into luncheons, and suppers into dinners; and thus the multitude of medico's gain bread,—for late hours and late gormandising cause sleepless nights and night-mares, and sleepless nights and night-mares cause dyspepsia and all other ills which require drugs. Ale, Sir, between twelve and two. Taste this." I did taste it, and pronounced it nectar. On this my friend, much pleased, added, "Well, the landlord has promised me a hogshead, and if you will pay me a visit

* The Lamb Hotel is now given up.

amid the hills and woods you are welcome to the lion's share. Ale, Sir, between twelve and two; claret from six to eight; at ten to bed, always before midnight. Never sleep between the hour of rising and going to bed, and never shave later than eight in the morning." Having offered this good advice, at which I laughed heartily, knowing how different my habits of life, once more we shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER IV.

From that hour we had not met, and now quite unexpectedly I found myself among his hills and woods. "How fortunate the vicinity of such a halting-place!" said I, "determining to pass the evening and, in spite of its being after hours, introduce my friend to the doctor and his ale. "He lives yonder," said the man applied to, "at the upper house." "In truth, my friend, there are many of them high enough. Which may be the upper one? The house on the top of this hill, I presume,"—as we drove towards a steep ascent. "No, Zur, no," said the man; "the house just at hand, that with the green railing." Fifty yards brought us to the door, where we came to a halt, for I had duly apprised Clifford that it was my intention to visit the doctor,

and he had consequently arranged it in his imagination that the doctor should be an ancient gentleman in black shorts and knee buckles, a flowing perriwig and watch chain half a yard long, with pendant seals attached. Instead of this patriarchal figure, behold a slight fair man bordering on thirty; that is, he might have been thirty-three or thirty-eight, but to swear to the one or the other would have been impossible. True he wore spectacles, but these were the spectacles of near-sightedness and not of old age. Most warmly did he welcome us, and having at once declared there was no other accommodation in the village save that he could offer worthy knight-errantry like ours, and that he had ample space, and for the nonce a well-filled larder, having recently received a present of a fine hind-quarter of a fawn from the park of a neighbouring Peer, which hung side by side with a couple of woodland rabbits, and that the hogshead of promised ale was tapped, we had little to fear as regards rest and refreshment. Having therefore accepted of this kind invitation as frankly as it was tendered, the doctor introduced us to his snug morning room, where having made acquaintance with his only companion, a bright-eyed terrier, which he duly informed us was hereafter to be displaced for a bright-eyed lady, whom he quaintly observed

some of these days it was his intention to take into partnership, he thence led us to two comfortable sleeping-apartments, where he left us to cool and refresh after our day's rambling, departing himself, as he announced, to give orders to his trusty housekeeper for the serving a repast fitting the occasion of visitors of such importance, more particularly alluding to my fat friend, whose appearance denoted that he rarely permitted his temper or digestion to be interfered with by the eating of a badly-cooked dinner, simple as might be the fare. And as luck would have it he had fallen into good quarters, for notwithstanding that the good woman was well nigh as quaint as her young master, as I shall proceed to show, she had catered for the tables of those who were wont to fare somewhat refinedly. Moreover, she esteemed him too much either to dishonour his hospitality or disgrace her culinary talents when occasion offered for their display. But let us descend from the sleeping-apartment, where my head and a basin of cold water had become refreshingly in contact, to the Doctor's kitchen, and there place our host and his attendant, Mrs. Blake, face to face,—a rare occurrence, for it was his general rule to leave all matters appertaining to the commisariat department entirely to her discretion.

"Well, Blake, you see I have two friends just

stepped in from London, on a visit to the Woodlands. They are both tired and hungry, may be."

"I have not seen them, Sir; but our boy Bumpkin told me such was the case. The lad is mad about their horse, and says our stable is not fitted for such a fine animal."

"Well, Blake, never mind our stable or their horse. What are you going to give them for dinner?"

"Dinner! Why its late for dinner; but I was going to give you our cold aitch bone of beef and some fried potatoes. You always like fried potatoes."

"True, but what can you provide for the dinner of these gentlemen? They would prefer, I fancy, something in addition to fried potatoes. In fact, I should like them to see that even in this solitude we can offer hospitality."

"Well, then, suppose I add a batter pudding. But I must air their sheets."

"Let me beg of you first to think of the dinner, and that as soon as possible. Now do your best—such as you can if you try; and do not disgrace my table."

"Well, if it must be, it must be. Dreadful extravagance! There's our haunch of fawn, I can roast and serve with currant jelly; a couple of

rabbits, sent by Farmer Easy, to pay for his pills I suppose; but we can't be making pills for poached rabbits. I can stew them in onions if you like them better than the fawn, or stuff them with the pickled oysters the Mayor sent you from Bristol—a rare dish for Londoners!"

This conversation, which I distinctly overheard *nolens volens*, convinced me that the property of the Doctor was shared with all under his roof. At all events, the good woman always spoke as if she were mistress. Nevertheless in his quiet way the master generally succeeded in gaining his point, and an hour afterwards we sat down to a well-served repast, which, as it appeared, was admirably cooked; and we not only pronounced it excellent, but did sufficient justice even to satisfy hospitality that would have admitted even to clearing the dishes. The haunch of fawn, dressed to a turn and in perfect flavour, headed the board, and was placed before the Doctor, while the rabbits, not stewed in onions, but stuffed with oysters, proved a dish fit for the palate of an Alderman, and so pleased my friend Clifford, that what with the friendly reception he had met with, the beauty of the scenery and fineness of the weather, but above all the excellence of a dish he had never previously met with, he appeared to be in such good spirits as

to forget for a moment that he was really enjoying himself in Old England, instead of discomfortising in foreign lands, and he became as gay as a lad of eighteen and as agreeable as a clever man of the world can be when, in the society of his class, he casts away all thought but the pleasures of the moment, and gives way to the joyous sensations which inspire him. The fawn and the rabbits were duly discussed and approved of, the ale pronounced first-rate; the cheese, which the Doctor termed a Wiltshire truccle, but nevertheless only made in the vale of Somerset, admitted to be almost equal to Stilton; and a good bottle of sherry being placed on the table, our host apologizing that his cellar was not so well filled as his larder, we sat around in the full enjoyment of bodily refreshment and mental recreation. The Doctor laughed, and pushed across the bottle and his snuff-box, and told us many a quaint story of his rural practice, at length proposing, that as the closing evening was one with which this changeable, but nevertheless, on the whole, best of all climates seldom favours us, that we should walk forth to the summit of a neighbouring height, which he termed the Golden Lea, and there, reclining on the verdant turf in the full enjoyment of a fragrant cigar, behold the setting of a brilliant sun beyond the woodlands.

To this we at once agreed, and were well repaid for the walk, for there as we reclined beneath the branches of an aged oak and looked forth on the wooded vale below in which the little village nestled, with its ancient Market Cross and Church standing as a giant to defend the whole, while admitting the beauty of the scene, made doubly interesting by the rising of a deep red harvest moon—a brilliant luminary from heaven to replace the golden sun, which sank beyond the woods in the distance—it would be difficult to explain the extreme silence, nay, saddening feelings inspired at the moment, notwithstanding the interest; indeed the effect appeared to strike the whole party, who for several minutes remained silent, puffing out wreaths of smoke. At length I turned to our kind host, and said, "While I admit the beauty of your retirement in the days of summer's brightness, I think it would be scarce less worthy of a visit when the Alpine snow casts its garb of whiteness on your vale and the icicles hang pendant from the trees; yet methinks it would be but a dull abiding-place for one whose life has been passed in what is termed "the world." Should such one be induced to settle here, he must necessarily have some positive motive or powerful interest. Give me that which in the distance appears as a fairy palace, standing in a grassy mead,

through which a silver snake appears to glide, while the giants of the forest stand around and about to guard it from intrusion, and I would people it with fairies that should cause its halls to echo with mirth and merriment. Welcome should there be beneath its roof for the sportsman on his return from the woodlands, or he who has passed his morning with Isaac Walton on the border of the river. At the morning's meal fair ladies and gallant cavaliers should meet in gladness around the board, while song and laughter and cheerful converse should make even the long hours of the winter's evening appear too short. Oh, were I even the inmate of yon lovely cottage, with her by my side most cherished on earth, and wherewithal to grant her in reason all her heart's desires, and the means of seeking other fair spots when so inclined; or had my lot been that of aiding or tending the sufferer in sickness, as is yours, thus occupying all your thoughts and cares; or the pastor of this lovely village; or even the schoolmaster,—for you have all your several duties and occupations!—and when you have time or inclination to look on the fair scenes around you, you forget its seclusion, and are thankful to God that He has cast your lot amid Nature's beauties! But to those who have no such causes to retain them here, I say it is well to look on

its charms as we have done, and then carry them away in imagination, while their freshness remains on the mind, to other spots less pleasing. It has chanced that fortune has favoured us with brilliant weather, bright suns and bright moons; moreover, the recollection of your kindness will enhance the gratification we have enjoyed. But to live here, Doctor, without some of the inducements I have named would be to bury oneself alive. But come, have you no tale to relate of demons, giants or spirits, connected with yonder Castle, above which the moon is now so splendidly appearing? What a scene for an artist, with its dark woods around it! or of that graceful monument below in the village mart, on whose head they have placed an extinguisher, thereby entirely putting out its beauties!"

"Of both," replied the Doctor with a smile; "but they are strange tales; how far true I cannot say. I believe them as a member of the community—it is my duty. You can do as you like; I shall relate them as to me they were related. My friend, however, permit me to request another of those Havannahs. Blest be the memory of Sir Walter Raleigh! to me the very best of friends, fried murphies being my favourite morning's meal, as Mrs. Blake justly observes. And a pipe—though I belong to the profession—I pronounce to be the

best cure for all ills save the want of ready money; and forsooth, even when my purse has been a trifle too low, Christmas not near at hand,—or worse, long past—with bills unpaid, for which I am obliged to wait till the butcher and the baker have had the lion's share of my patient's spare cash, I have seen in the curling smoke a friend in the distance who has said, 'Ask, and I will lend thee a groat till such time as thou hast realised thine own from thy Yorkshire property.'"

"Thou art a lucky fellow to find such a friend; but instead of building castles of tobacco smoke, pray tell us of the Castle in yon distance."

CHAPTER V.

"Well, gentlemen, once upon a time—but let me see, it was not once upon a time, but a long time ago, that a tower stood where yon tower now stands, which present building I conceive to have been erected solely as a trifle of the picturesque, or as a centre around which pic-nic parties revolve. It has, however, another advantage—gastronomy being one, and justice duly done to pie and porter. The aged, as is the natural consequence of digestion, take a siesta beneath the shadow of its walls, while the fair young maidens and merry young men naturally propose to mount to the summit, not of the actual ruin, but of the modern imitation. To see the view, of course the young ladies, as in courtesy should be, mount first; they reach the

flag-staff, and look forth with admiration on wood and park below. The young men follow, as in duty bound, and their view is also pleasing. High on the ascent, they look not on the fair country, but on the neat ancles, if there be any, of the ladies who precede them. I speak of the modern Castle," said the Doctor, with a sly glance at my fat friend, who was greatly edified; "but as regards the old one, it stood not precisely on the spot where that model of ancient feudalism now stands, but a trifle or so beyond it, where you may still see a foundation. It remains, the sole evidence, as being merely a portion of the ancient abode of the ancestors of my amiable patients, who now prefer luxuriating in the vale below us. The Baron then existing positively found it too cold in the winter to reside on the hill-tops, so he wisely removed a greater portion of the old castle, and with the materials built himself a modern house, where yonder chimneys now smoke; but he left the tower, not the tower we now look on, but one much higher, as a mark of his feudal greatness—moreover as a pleasant abiding-place for those who were apt to make too free with the goods and chattels of their neighbours. Now it so chanced that, enjoying the freshness of yon park, which is now enclosed, as also over the neighbouring hills, there ranged some

scores of fine deer. The Baron was fond of venison pasty; his lady preferred the haunch,—as I do, gentlemen, when I can get it; and it so happened that others, who probably abided in the neighbouring cities, had similar tastes, and consequently were prepared to pay a good price to those who offered a a good side of venison for sale. It was therefore not surprising that several of the finest and fattest of the herd should occasionally disappear; indeed, their owner, as set forth in an old M.S. now in the castle, did on one fine day chance to dine with the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, or Abbot in those days, as might be, when, having been there helped from a haunch of fat venison, he thus addressed the aged Prelate: 'Your venison is excellent, my lord; the flavour, indeed, is such that had I not known it to belong to your right reverence, I should have pronounced it to be my own.' And he said truly, for the purveyor of the mitred lord had purchased it of a poacher. After this the Baron became more strict, and set careful watchers in order to discover the thieves. At length, one moonlight night, at the very moment of taking a deliberate aim at a fine fat hart, a culprit was secured, and brought before the Baron, who instantly ordered him to be confined in the tower, that he might examine him

at his ease in the morning. Having discussed a substantial breakfast, he sat in his well-cushioned chair, and ordered the poacher to be brought before him. For this purpose two foresters were sent to the tower; they mounted the steps, looked into a small round chamber, and called loudly for the man to descend. But alas! the chamber was empty. They mounted to the top, gained the platform, but nothing was there. The unfortunate venison-dealer had thrown himself from the parapet."

"And was of course dashed to atoms!" we both exclaimed.

"Not a bit of it—nothing half so absurd," said the Doctor, with perfect calmness. "There was a sort of lightning conductor, or some such thing, which ran down the side of the building. I am told that it was scarcely supposed that a cat or a squirrel could have descended in safety. But liberty, gentlemen, is liberty. What will not man do to regain it? Recollect Baron Trenck; why not an English poacher? He was gone—off—far away. Footsteps were discovered; he was traced across the stream; and the bold Baron lost another stag the following night. But the mist rises from the river and the air is cool. I can offer you an excellent glass of Scheidam; and then you shall have a story of the Cross."

CHAPTER VI.

"There are men who deem the hours they spend apart
From the gay world and converse with mankind,
Dull, void, and lost, who breathe but in a crowd
Of miscalled friends and flatterers, and whose lives
Are bustle, noise, and seeming happiness."

The brilliant summer's moon cast its silvery rays o'er tower and dark woodland, church and glittering stream, as we walked down the grassy slopes leading to the Doctor's residence; indeed it was a scene so calm and yet so beautiful that the mind's wandering thoughts led memory back to the gaieties of the great metropolis in which we had so recently taken part, and really made it appear as if we had sat on the carpet of Aladdin and been wafted through mid air to scenes of bewildering romance. Forsooth,

a lover of nature, which I confess myself to be in the most enthusiastic spirit, does sometimes allow himself to be carried away into a labyrinth of castle building, which even life's realities, that come soon and bitterly enough each hour of our existence, do not for the moment entirely overthrow. Long then could I have lingered in contemplation of this valley of sweet waters, in which the village snugly nestled in such perfect repose that few would have thought some hundred hearts were there beating with emotions of joy or sorrow, or, the labour of the day being over, were preparing by rest for the morrow's duties. The nightingale's note alone broke on the night's delicious stillness, with a thrilling yet nervous sadness, for saddening, however beautiful, is the song of this brief visitor to our island home: as joyous in comparison are the notes with which the gay and thrilling skylark ushers in the freshness of morning, carolling over the crimsoned poppy-clad fields, bidding the labourer rise from his refreshing sleep thankful to God that he is permitted to go forth once more to earn the bread of life by honest industry, and thus cheer the homes and hearts of those who form his world.

But we again approached the house. Our host threw wide the portal and once more welcomed us, adding, "Now then, gentlemen, you must try and

mix a sleeping draught yourselves, for which I will give you a prescription, without fee or reward, save that you must not forget that my importation of Cognac from our neighbours of the Republic is somewhat more powerful even than the ale from the queen of cities. So be careful; for since the President has sat on the magisterial seat, if we must so term it—that upper step of the ladder, which some say may lead to the throne—he has had the good taste to recollect English hospitality, and thus permits it to come over only one-third watered." At the moment of tendering these hospitalities, however, he was interrupted by his faithful housekeeper, with—

"Please, Sir, the Widow Holbrook has just walked over from the Firs, with a terrible internal pain. She has heard that the cholera is raging in the papers, and she requires some of your infallible mixture; so I thought it better to give her a little peppermint with a drop of cordial, awaiting till you returned, when I knew you would add a box of your cure-all pills to take home with her, poor creature! for she is one of your pensioners."

"In truth is she," said the Doctor, "and a hard bargain to boot. Cure her, poor woman! Who can but He who rules all things? All I can do is to stimulate—stimulate, and thus support life."

True enough, the poor emaciated creature was well-nigh intoxicated by the force of second stimulants to cure the evils arising from her first potation. Horrible vice! execrable weakness! Alas, how are they to be condemned; yet how doubly pitied, that are hurried on to excesses by the sufferings of body or the mind, and fly to such resources to ease the pangs of the one or drown the sufferings of the other, instead of kneeling to their Saviour!

But our host soon despatched her with a box of his infallible pills, as he termed them, while my warm-hearted friend, ever ready to open his purse-strings when poverty called—though sometimes, forsooth, his generosity was ill bestowed—added half-a-crown to the pills, and sent her home, if not cured of bodily pangs, at least in a happy state of excitement, which doubtless ere nightfall she contrived to turn into oblivion.

The sight of a patient, however, recalled clearly to our minds that we were enjoying the hospitality of a professor of medicine, though I must confess one is so prone to connect these hard-working and highly-valued members of society with grey-hair wigs and knee buckles, that when I looked at the mild, fair, youthful face of him who had just been so kindly adminstering to one so little deserving of his

care, and that in terms as were he about to receive a large fee instead of granting kind gratuitous advice, I could scarcely believe that he had such an extensive district under his medical control, and, as I had been justly informed, that to young and aged of the poorer class he was a kind friend and protector, and was not less respected by the higher and more educated classes. But the times advance, and happily for mankind and the force of education professional men of all grades may henceforth keep pace with them in the opinion of those capable of estimating or whose estimation is of value. Nevertheless, well can I recollect the day, and that not lang syne, when a surgeon—that is to say, what is now termed a general practitioner—save that he held a commission either in the army or the navy, and even these gentlemen, notwithstanding their position, were considered as persons more tolerated, than generally admitted into society. The title of M.D., in fact, was frequently absolutely necessary to admit him, who in all respects might be considered a man of high education, enlightened mind and first-rate attainments.

But let us hear what the good Doctor has himself to say on this subject, for truly is it one of interest. Indeed I scarcely ever think of that truly admirable work, entitled the "Diary of a Physician" without

regretting that the autobiography of many a labouring medical man has not been offered to the world; for did time permit such men to keep a faithful record of each passing day, how many a tale could they unfold, probing deep to the sinner's heart, of unrepenting death-bed scenes!—how many a joyous history of mercies vouchsafed by God, who thus permits the science of man to relieve the tortured body and often, oh! how often! to raise those from a fevered, sick bed of sin, agony and misery, to a life of repentance and joy.

But we sat a pleasant party and merry withal in this his little "snuggery," as he termed it, whose style of adornment it would be truly difficult to define. Nevertheless, was it snug enough in all reason, though marked by a total absence of all the gilded luxury of Belgravia, making it perchance somewhat quaint, though by no means wanting in refinement to the eye accustomed to the saloons of courtiers and the luxurious comforts of White's, Brook's, and the Reform Club. What is there, however, not acceptable to reasoning men, with the charms of Nature without and warm-hearted, generous, unaffected and unpretending hospitality within, such as greeted us. So while Clifford reclined in a good, roomy arm-chair—of other days in fashion—I, the less in importance, as in bulk, enjoyed the

luxury of a half-garden, half-reposing benger,—a present from a dearly beloved friend to our host, with the windows wide open on his little garden, from whence the perfume of flowers sent forth a double fragrance, as if in thankfulness to the glorious moon which shone on the many-coloured parterres, not forgetting a beautifully-arranged and well-selected bouquet on the table, which recalled to mind female friendship and attention, and at once banished all that imagination might place in the way of our entire enjoyment from supposed evils derived from the want of the inexhaustible provision provided by man's genius in these inventive times for man's indolence.

There are luxuries, moreover, which God in his abundant kindness has granted to man, simple and within moderate means, that I have ever looked on as beyond all price; constant friends to man in sorrow and sickness, health and joy; friends when the snow of winter covereth the earth, as when the summer's sun gladdens the vales; friends when even the home is companionless and the heart is heavy. I speak of the sight of a cheerful fire; the perfume and charm derived from fresh flowers, come they from the garden of the humble cottager or the conservatory of the rich. To illustrate such fact, well can I recollect, after a long day's march

at Christmas time having arrived with my gallant corps in country quarters. Soldiers all, civilians how many? You may be well acquainted with an officer's quarters in one of her gracious Majesty's barracks in 'merrie England.' If not, fair ladies, young and old—citizens and gentlemen, who live at home at ease, in luxury and wealth—or you gentlemen members of the Peace Congress, who love not peace less than do I, yet begrudge the humble pittance of those who have fought and bled for the glory of their country,—permit me for a moment to leave the Doctor's snuggery and introduce you to a captain's quarters—apartments provided by the State for one, perchance, who has gallantly fought in some score battles, and paid heavily for that permission in good coin of the realm; apartments good enough are they, and rarely complained of, though forsooth I question if half the merchants' clerks in the kingdom would not turn up their noses at them. Enter and behold four white-washed walls; a window perchance looking into an uninteresting, dreary barrack square; as furniture, a table marked with the broad arrow to prove it to be the property of the Crown, and therefore sacred as regards destruction; two or three chairs; a grate, welcome friend! fire-irons, and a coal-box. Enter, as I have done, into such an abode after a long and weary

March, weather miserable, cold, wet and dreary, season November, and tell me how you like it. Your baggage has not arrived, yet your duty compels you, and justly so, to remain till you have seen to the comfort of your men. You feel, as I have done, considerably disgusted. Never mind, always make the best of things. If you smoke, as most men do in this year of 1850, as probably you will by mechanism after the Great Exhibition of 1851, you will take out your cigar-box, select a prime Havannah, light it, sit on the corner of the table and puff ad libitum, if not sing or whistle. At length your trusty servant arrives with your belongings, as does also the messman and his belongings; and when the hour for dinner has arrived, if the quarter be not a garrison one, when you are sure of a kind reception from some other regiment, and prepare to attend their mess; you join a scrambling repast at your own. Your carpet bag is opened, you make your costume, and leave your miserable-looking room in haste and almost in despair at the horrible discomfort which reigns on all sides, your bed half prepared in this corner, trunks here, boxes there, everything scattered about, all dismal and cold within and doubly cold and wretched without.

I will now put things in the best position. I

always like to look on the bright side of the question. You have a trusty servant; you have made him so by your kindness and justice; he respects you; your comforts are his own. A good dinner over, you forget the fatigue of the march and all other disagreeables. You approach your quarters again to retire to rest, with some misgivings. What a change has come over the spirit of the same! You look not at the tallow-candle stuck in the neck of a black bottle; you care not that you are to sleep on a mattress thrown into the corner of the room; the dire mass of confusion among your goods and chattels offends not your eye. There is a bright, cheerful, blazing fire provided, and for this the Army are indebted to the people of England: it is some compensation for the winning of such battles, even as Waterloo and Vittoria, some compensation even for the horrors of a campaign, and at such moments it is so grateful to man that I really believe a barn would become a palace. I have given this trifling instance as one among thousands where a fire becomes a most warm and cheerful friend. In like manner, when the leaf is on the tree and the joyous birds are enlivening the woodlands with their soft notes, let any one who has one particle of mind or is possessed of one iota of the milk of human kindness enter into the most comfortless of

rooms, and behold that fairest of Nature's gifts, a splendid bouquet of flowers on the table; and while a feeling of comfort will strike home to his heart, nine times out of ten he will find there are some loving qualities among those who claim it as their home.

"Most amiable Doctor, I beg your pardon for this digression. The bright moon which is now beaming into your snuggery, as you term it, rests, if I am not in error, on a human skull. Pardon me that I remark on the peculiarity of your decorations; here before me I behold exotics worthy of of an eastern garden. Yonder, if I err not, above the mantel-piece you have a noble print which speaks I should imagine, and speaks truly, that he who lives amid this valley of sweet waters is addicted to follow in the footsteps of one, simple in nature though great in mind, whose greatest joy was to wander by the brook. Doubtless your library contains the 'Complete Angler;' if not, recall to mind the following lines:—

'Bless'd silent groves, oh! may you be,
For ever, mirth's best nursery!
May pure contents
For ever pitch their tents
Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains!
And peace still wander by these purling fountains,
Which we may every year
Meet when we a come a fishing here.'

And another, over yonder bookcase, which would induce me to believe that when the huntsman's horn echoes through yon dark woods the lad who was admiring our good steed anon has been employed the night previous in giving an extra polish to his master's hunting-gear."

"And you are quite correct in your surmise. I own to a weakness for both these noble sports, when time and duty permit me to join in the one or the other, which is seldom, I can assure you."

"Well, your profession is useful in all places, but not seldom in the hunting-field. But what of the skull, my good friend? Is it a mere adornment to the snuggery of an Esculapius, or is there a history attached to that particular pericranium? Was it too soft to pass through this hard-hearted world of ours, or too hard to live in peace with its fellow men? To me it appears neither symetrical in formation, as far as I can judge, or peculiar in beauty."

"Neither is it. I retain it from the simple fact of its having been thrown up by the ploughshare in this locality. I hope bye and bye to introduce to you some interesting spots in this neighbourhood. Within a few miles of us is a village called Slaughter-Ford, where History asserts a battle was fought between Alfred the Great and the

Danes. Whether this be an English or a Danish skull I know not; but here you will perceive is the death wound," he added, pointing out a deep cut which must have entered the brain; "and the arm that gave it was possessed of no ordinary muscle. To me it is a relic, simply as an old book or an ancient coin; nothing more."

SLAUGHTER-FORD CHURCH.

"And truly is it a curiosity of no common order; nevertheless one which I fancy the giver of these beautiful flowers will remove from your snuggery

to your surgery, or under a glass case, as soon as you give up your bachelor comforts for the connubial joys. Alas! these flowers were bestowed by a kind and aged widower, one who was once surrounded by a beauteous family. It pleased God, however, to take them all, even to the very last and youngest loved one; but he has faith in Him who chastens, and instead of complaining of his sad lot he bears himself as a Christian only can, looking forward to join them in a better world, and while here spending his limited means in charity with his neighbours, while his calm life flows on in peace and liberal association, even with these beauteous friends which Nature has provided, as in good will with all mankind.

"But time flies fast, too fast to listen to tales of sadness, and what I have to give believe me I give freely. Therefore let me beg you will taste the contents of this long-necked importation from the land of chivalry—if so you will it—for 'tis well to be courteous; it cost even less than the "water of life," so to translate it; and truly is it in seasonable times a most efficient aid to men of my profession. Yet methinks it would be more appropriately termed "eau de la mort," as the bitterest enemy to man. Nevertheless, the fault lies in the abuse, not the use. So with your permission I

will propose a toast, 'Here's a health to all whom we love, and all who love us.' I would add in all sincerity, 'all who may fancy they hate us,' for I cannot bring my mind to believe that the word, though often used in the English language, is ever responded to by the feelings which exist in the warm hearts of our merry islanders."

"A noble sentiment, Doctor, to which I truly respond. But come, you promised us the tale of the Cross; and charming as is your locality, still more so is your kind hospitality. Ere to-morrow's sun has chased the dew from the meads we must be far from hence."

"I will not hear of it, such an arrangement," our host exclaimed; "to-morrow you remain here. My larder is not yet empty, the hogshead barely tasted. Moreover, there are spots of beauty in this neighbourhood to which I would desire to introduce you —spots with which you will be not less pleased than interested. Come, you will oblige me. It is not often that I enjoy friendly and intellectual intercourse such as you have afforded me, and I am sure you would not desire to destroy the pleasing anticipations I have allowed myself to form."

"Not I," said Clifford, with hearty good will; "I'm here for a week, if my presence gives you the slightest pleasure. This repose is refreshing beyond

measure. After a London season, your frank hospitality, believe me, in my estimation is beyond all price. I have really to thank my friend Linton that he persuaded me to renounce a foreign campaign for one season at least, that I may take a peep into the rich pictures offered by my native land. We have commenced auspiciously, and I doubt not but that I shall become a convert to his love for oak and beech woods, which in luxuriant reality are alone to be found in Old England."

Rejoiced to find that Clifford so readily entered into the pleasures of a rural English tour, I heartily consented to the Doctor's wishes, and it was thus arranged that we should take up our abode for another day beneath his roof, in which plan the boy Bumpkin, who chanced to enter at the moment for some orders in reference to his master's profession, appeared to give a grinning consent. Whether the good housekeeper was equally satisfied with the arrangement I am not prepared to say; at all events she did her duty to her master and his guests.

"The question is settled unanimously," said the Doctor, "and I thank you for your ready acquiescence in my wishes, which are—

'None, but to desire your good company;'

so I will be up with the sun, visit the few patients

I have in the village; and then command me. If perchance I have to peep here and there into the labourer's cot or farmer's homestead during our ramble, you will pardon me, for smiling Nature on all sides will well repay you for the halt by the way-side."

"We shall all be patience; yet for once permit me to peep behind the scenes. It would gladden me to know that your labours are neither light or ill requited. Have you a large district? many patients? In fact, let me put the question in plain words, Have you what is termed a good practice? Pardon me if I intrude by such a remark, but I have been told that of all the learned professions that of medicine is the most uncertain and precarious. I speak as to the fortunes of him who pursues it, either to obtain fame or, what ninety-nine times out of a hundred is the literal case, to obtain the bread of life."

"You name a subject which would require volumes clearly to unravel. However, you shall know all I know, the more readily, inasmuch as I am assured your question is dictated by the kindest motives. Alas, many and many a sad tale could medical men unfold,—not only of those on whom they are called to administer, but of their own unrequited struggles in life's battle. Many, aye, many a soothing draught are they called on to offer

to those whose sufferings in comparison are as light as a feather in the scale to the pangs of him who gives it. You ask me if I have a good practice. I infer from this question that you mean, do I derive a good income from my professional services? I answer deliberately, no. What if I were to tell you that although my district may be said to embrace a circumference the radius of which is nearly ten miles, I scarcely keep the wolf from the door,—an expression I would imagine to mean the heavy hand of want and humiliation, whose grasp is felt more keenly even than the fangs of that voracious animal. However, if it cause you the slightest interest I will say a few words in reference to that profession, among which are numbered some of the most gifted, some of the most amiable, as in like manner some of the greatest dunces in the realm—a profession which, thanks to these enlightened days, is becoming better understood and more justly appreciated. But few years since a village apothecary was classed not one iota above the society of the good dame who provides our little colony with cheese, bacon and tobacco,—that is, for the male population,—and equally for a consideration distributes ribbons and staylaces to the village maids and matrons. Suffice that he could bleed and blister, perchance take a hand at cribbage

or backgammon, and unfold to rural gossips tales of their neighbours, and having none to tell be enabled to invent them to gratify the calumniator and lover of idle scandal. Little wonder, my good friends, that such was the case, when every squirearchal house or lordly mansion possessed its medicine chest and contained a housekeeper, whose duties were by no means confined to a knowledge of jams and preserves, but embraced every imaginable receipt for human ills. Moreover, the honourable degree of Doctor of Medicine, like that of Divinity, in those unreformed days, was as cheaply bought as may be. As an illustration, I will tell you a humorous tale, which I have heard or read, I know not where or when. Be it as it may, it is good enough for the repetition, and by no means exaggerated. But first let me beg of you to replenish your glasses. Poor as my practice as regards professional resources, I thank God that I have a trifle wherewithal for a cloudy day; and still more do I thank him that he has filled my heart with hospitable feelings towards those who honour my humble roof. Pray fill to the brim, and let our next toast be, 'The Queen, God bless her!' She has set a bright example to English mothers—an example that casts rays of sunshine and hope, o'er the cottage hearths of our rural districts."

"With all my heart," said Clifford; "and now for your tale, for I am truly interested in your profession."

"Well, it is brief enough and sufficiently ludicrous, though doubtless often told. A minister of the Scotch church, who I fear was somewhat wanting in strength from above, but who nevertheless taught poor men to the best of his belief for a certain annual stipend—a stipend, by the bye, which sadly required to come under the Official Salary Committee, or some such very praiseworthy inquisition, if justly attended to, inasmuch as we might then perchance find that a hard-working, Christian, God-loving pastor might be provided with the means of daily bread, whereas many a Very Reverend Divine would be satisfied with a third of their present incomes; but this is a subject I scarcely like to touch on, for I desire to judge as little as I would be judged.

"But to return to his Reverence anent: the border hearing that the University of St. Andrew's sold honors, and deeming that his ministration would be more acceptable, if not more useful, if he possessed a doctorate, he proceeded at once to purchase the dignity. On his return he sent for his faithful servant and thus addressed him:—'Noo, Saunders, ye'll aye be sure to call me the Doctor, and gin

ony body spiers at you about me, ye'll be aye sure to say the Doctor in his study, the Doctor is engaged, or the Doctor will see you in a crack.' 'That depends, was the man's reply, 'on whether you ca' me the Doctor too.' The reverend Divine stared. 'Aye, it's jist so,' continued the other, 'for when I heard that it cost sae little I ee'n got a diploma myself; sae ye 'll jist be good enough to say, 'Doctor put on some coals,' or 'Doctor bring that whisky and hot water;' and gin any body spiers at ye about me, ye'll be sure to say 'the Doctor's in the pantry,' or 'the Doctor's digging potatoes,' as the case may be."

Now, ludicrous as this anecdote may appear, truly do I believe that it is in no manner overdrawn or untrue. And if doctorial degrees were thus cheaply vouchsafed to divines in other days, believe me they were still more lavishly and more cheaply supplied to the honourable profession of medicine. Thus we find even in the Queen of western cities, the very hot-bed of M.Ds., no aid to those who have availed themselves of the distinction at a small outlay; yet I question, were you to search throughout the United Kingdom among the profession, whether you would find a greater majority of highly-gifted, christian and scientific labourers in their calling. When speaking to men of the world,

however, I need scarcely tell them, although the fact being made known to them is humiliating, that the people, according to popular phraseology, as all else, bend low the heart, if not the knee, imprimis to wealth and then to worldly distinction, perchance the aristocracy of wealth—how come by?—who careth?—mammon is their idol of idols, even with those who, having all the means of life's enjoyment, ought at least to evince no craven spirit! Yet is it so, probably from the fact that having tasted of the apple they can form a fair estimate of its seductions, and envying those who have the whole fruit they long themselves for a larger portion, and estimate the possessor accordingly. To be a first-rate doctor, then, among the vulgar constitutes not the possession of medical science, but powers of physical cure as marvellous as fallacious, and the secret of curing all ills by which man is physically tormented; *ergo*, to be an M.D.—a diploma'd M.D.—is to be a witch in knee-buckles or a walking bottle of infallible medicine. But I crave your pardon for these long details. The truth must out. You question me under my own roof-tree. You fight the battle against odds. A practice, gentlemen, is attainable then very rarely by qualifications, even be those qualifications of the highest order. To establish yourself in a wealthy

position in our profession there are several requisites. I will endeavour to enumerate them. Imprimis, a small capital, sufficient I will say to purchase a well-built chariot or Brougham, a fine stepping horse, with a well-dressed servant as the driver—yourself within—rattling at all hours about the streets of a fashionable town; looking independent—as you doubtless are as long as your stock of ready money lasts; ask no favours, dress neatly, look self-satisfied and perfectly at ease. Be assured, after you have followed this plan for a month, they will ask who is that gentleman in the yellow chariot or the chocolate Brougham; in two, the answer will be, the celebrated Dr. Cureall; in three, he will be the charming, delightful creature, have a first-rate practice, be employed by all the dames and dowagers and pronounced a love of a man.

"There is another mode, as easy and effectual. Put on a sanctified face; purchase a Scotch diploma; hold to Henry of Exeter or Gorham, as may be; be sure to take the strongest side. If both fail, be an Independent, or a Baptist, or a Wesleyan, or mount a long-skirted coat and look towards Rome; wear well-made polished, but not creaking, boots; step lightly, and speak like a flute; care not whether you know the taste of rhubarb from cayenne; suffice it that you have a book, easily

obtained, wherein are prescriptions for all complaints; employ a first-rate chemist—fee him, and send him game; and you will be knighted, probably baronetted, before five years have elapsed. There is one more decided plan to secure a medical fortune. Have the good luck to pick up a rich, well-fed Alderman, who has slipped on the icy street and fractured his leg; cure the leg without refusing him his usual turtle and punch; or, what is better, cure a dowager's lap-dog, when half-choked from repletion, and condole over the sweet creature as were it a mother's first-born or the long-hoped-for heir to an illustrious descent.

"These, gentlemen, are the real and distinct modes of obtaining professional eminence and distinction. Labour, unceasing industry, genius, the highest practical skill, eminent knowledge of the theory of medicine—these are secondary considerations to the crowd, though under God's blessing they do sometimes succeed. When they do not, we may hug this to our heart of hearts—that He who vouchsafed the greatest worldly treasures expects much, yet often, sadly be it said, obtains little from those so greatly blessed; while the sufferer here has a haven of rest, if he will only seek it, hereafter—beyond all price. But I weary you."

"No."

"Well, then, I will only add that, in these days, to obtain a thorough knowledge of your profession, requires not only much study, much education, but also a considerable expenditure—I may fairly say an expenditure which, if judiciously availed of, would in any mercantile pursuit or other civil profession lead to fortune. Not only this, but the passing of the Apothecaries' Hall, and that higher distinction, but far less arduous one, the College of Surgeons, are practical requirements by no means easy of attainment. But all these facts go for nothing among the uneducated class, and among those who ought to know better. A surgeon is simply, a man who can use a lancet and make a pill, feel a pulse, or prescribe a potion,—just in the same ratio as a tailor makes a coat, or, as I verily believe, they sometimes fancy a butcher makes a sirloin of beef. The anatomy of the human form divine ——! Bah! such an idea is preposterous. For the exciting and splendidly scientific studies of botany and chemistry, what care they? A man is made as an animal, and as an animal should be cured. Alas! poor slaves, but country, rural doctors, I will call them. Heaven help their multiplicity of duties—their slender means! No drudge is worked so hard, no postman so ill requited; early and late they are sought for, and

little the thanks. Fancy yourself, Colonel Clifford, snugly ensconced between the sheets of a downy four-poster—the hour, two, p.m.—the morning one of January's worst—half-frost, combined with sleet and snow. You dream that you sit by the borders of a placid lake, in the brilliancy of Midsummer time, amid flowers and shady foliage, with her by your side you love best on earth. All Nature is glowing with luxuriance and peace; the birds sing merrily, and your heart is overflowing with happiness. You are half awake, in a sort of trance; the night-bell rings loudly; you hasten to put on your clothes, and descend, when lo! a lout of a rustic mounted on a cart-horse commands you—mark! not solicits, commands you—for you have your price—to hasten some ten or twelve miles, over hill and vale, for his beauteous Sukey is taken in labour of her first fond pledge. Your dreams are scattered to the winds, or the snow or the sleet. You mount your trusty roadster, half waking and sleeping, and ride well nigh frozen to the spot in time to welcome an addition to the rural population; and after passing some hours in a miserable cottage you return by the time the sun, if there be any, is high in the heavens, to commence the labours of the day. For this welcome of a man into the world you receive, or ought to receive, ten

shillings—half the sum the coachman of the heavy Exeter was wont to pocket for driving two stages—and this he did pocket—but perchance you do not for many months after it is due, if ever.

"This is one of the very many evils attending a country practice. If you have means of your own, there is indeed a great solace in attending and administering to the sufferings of the poorer class. If on the contrary you have not, and that your heart perchance is warm, your disposition sensitive, and you are generous, your case is a bad one indeed, for it is impossible to ask the poor for their money, whatever be your right; and if they give freely, it is at times not less painful to receive.

"There are other evils among the many I could enumerate. If you are studious, delight in books, have a refined mind and long for association; in fact, if by birth or education or in mind you are a gentleman, your position is still more painful. The squirearchy of the smaller class rarely admit a medical man save he be an M.D., by purchase or otherwise, beyond the house-keeper's room, though in case of necessity the dear good man is permitted to prescribe for Mamma's pet dog, or even has the entree into Mamma's boudoir. The higher class of squirearchy, being squires by birth, not money, are in a great degree more courteous. A man of edu-

cation is by them considered fit society for his fellow men. And as you rise to higher aristocratic distinction, I am ready to admit that a greater degree of courtesy is conceded. May be, however, you have neither squire, or peer, or educated man in the neighbourhood. Therefore all your tastes, all your associations, must centre in yourself; or you must step lower, instead of rising higher, in the ladder of life and demean yourself. At times, indeed, you are obliged to associate with farmers, amiable excellent men in their way, who, were they sensible of the crime committed by Mr. Caxton, save that there is a widely-circulated print called the *Mark Lane Express*, would burn him in effigy for the simple fact that swedes and mangold wurzel are to them the summit of all their earthly considerations—a book they rarely open.

"You see before you, gentlemen, one who is devoted to the science of medicine. Here among the woodlands I use my pestal and mortar, and if I can do my duty to the poor I shall gain something; and the knowledge that I have friends like yourselves at times to visit me in my seclusion when the leaf is on the forests will still enable me to pass many a winter's evening in thankfulness for God's mercies and hope for joys to come."

"You are right, Doctor; let those assert to the contrary who will, your profession is a noble and most praiseworthy one, and much, much gratitude is due to those who labour in a cause so beneficial to all mankind. But the hour of midnight approaches, and as we are to enjoy your society tomorrow, permit us to say good night; and although the moon is high in mid heaven, and the weather balmy as that beyond the Alps, I trust no summons may disturb the pleasant dreams I wish you."

CHAPTER VII.

"What clime is like to thee, my native land?
Thine air hath fed the spirit of the brave—
Hath the pale cheek of dying hero fanned,
And mourned a requiem o'er his dying grave."

I fancy I hear some idle fair one who has received my memoranda of the West as a new importation from the circulating library in order to assist in the passing of a rainy day ere she perform the distressing duties of dressing for dinner, and then to some fashionable re-union, exclaim—"England and the Exhibition, indeed!—rather call it the biography of a medical student;" while another reclining on a soft ottoman, shaded from the summer heat by a Venetian blind, attracted perchance by the title, and dreaming of Cashmeres,

fancies she is about to read of Eastern scenes, vales of roses and calm lakes, is utterly dismayed, ere she has arrived at Combe, to find I speak of her native land.

Have patience then, both of you. I write no fiction, but of man as he really is in his sorrow, and of Nature as we daily witness her, bedecked in charms which God alone can create, and for which we scarcely deign to return one particle of gratitude. Reader, if you are not content to journey with me longer, male or female, put by the volume at once. It contains not a line of romance save those which speak of "days lang syne." If your curiosity leads onwards, and you desire to know more of home, join our merry party at the Doctor's breakfast table. He can find a place for you, perchance, in his four-wheeler, and the stout roan Grizzle shall put forth his strength for the day. My custom is not that of early rising, though it is of early reading, save when there is matter of business or interest in the van.

"Who cares whether you rise early or late?" says a gentleman with a cigar in his mouth and his feet on the fender, who has peeped perchance into these pages from the utter want of something better to do. "Who the —" (I was about to commit myself,) "cares whether a fellow who writes books gets

up or goes to bed at all—bores, innumerable bores, all save Dickens and Lover,—I never read ought but their monthlies. As for scenes in the West; I never knew there were any; or waters either, save lavender and eau de Cologne. Perhaps the book is a sort of directory to the perfumery."

Read on young man, and bear this in mind, that something may be learnt from a knowledge of the daily habits of every human being who lives on earth, either of good or evil. If it be of good, hug it to your heart; if of evil, you have a memory to cast it from. It is wise to learn experience at another man's station ere we hazard our own capital; and if we cannot find a place for you in our carriage, at all events the Doctor will invite you to a good repast; after which I for one have no objection to join you in the discussion of a real Havannah—rare luxury, seldom obtained in reality, though to believe the dealers of such articles they must grow like bull-rushes all over the ditch sides in Europe.

On this occasion, the advent of a most agreeable day, I awoke early from a calm and refreshing sleep. Our good host, however, was true to his word, and had performed various acts of professional duty and kindness among the villagers ere he permitted our being disturbed. The rattling,

however, of small stones against the casement warned me to be on the move, and, turning open the shutters and the window, the refreshing breezes of a bright summer morning caused me a feeling of exhilirating delight. Beyond the terraced garden, on which the windows of our bedroom looked, appeared the green woodlands, while the picturesque church tower rose apparently from amidst them, making a landscape, small in compass, and yet such as an artist could turn by the genius of his pencil guided by the hand of the mind into no common gem.

"Well," said the Doctor, who stood on the top of a flight of steps, in the midst of Floral treasures, with spectacles on his nose, and a straw hat large enough for a West Indian planter—indeed, to judge from hearsay, a very precise representation of such nankeen-attired individuals,—"it is time you were discussing some of my fresh eggs. The hens are remarkably obliging, particularly when I have guest; and to day, as if forewarned that we require something substantial ere we set out on our excursion, they have permitted me to offer you an omelet—I trust such as Soyer could not surpass. But you must hasten with the lather-brush and the razor, for my amiable superintendent—that is my housekeeper, dear old woman—requires much

command of temper, particularly when her *cuisine* is destroyed by dilatory ablutions. Moreover, Providence has cast a bright sunshine o'er the earth, most propitious for our rambles."

"Your housekeeper has reason on her side; and as for spoiling an omelet by dilatory dandifying, fear it not; so be off. Give Clifford warning of the hour. And hark ye, Doctor, tell the good woman to add a rasher of bacon to the fresh eggs. Recollect we are direct from the Great Babylon, and there is an association with Wiltshire and bacon tantamount only to Devon and clotted cream."

"Be it so; you shall be supplied."

The voice of his good servant presently exclaims, "They wish some of our bacon, do they?—these fine London gentlemen!" While I proceed to shave, luckily with a blunt razor—for so intent am I in admiration of the dark foliage and the hay-makers in a field on the sloping hill side and the church turrets, that I forget there is a glass on my dressing table, my mind being reflected in Nature's beauties rather than my face therein—hearken to the chorus of the thrush and the blackbird in yon wooded vale; listen to the lark, high o'er the corn lands, floating in mid air—Heaven's own birds! What thrilling notes

are those! Never do I rise on so beautiful, so glad a summer's morning as was that, (and there are many such in our peaceful England,) even be my mind o'ercharged with heaviness, that I do not feel a gladness within me, as if the very brightness of Nature made one's heart feel more as a Christian towards our fellow creatures—indeed, brought us nearer to God. At such seasons and on such occasions, amid the beauties of Nature, far from the busy turmoil of man, struggling on for wealth or fame or for what not, I confess I often wish here on earth there were no great towns, no marts of Mammon, no multitudes fighting onwards in the great battle of life against one another, as were we sent on earth like the wild beasts of the forests to destroy one another, instead of living in peaceful communion with all in the midst of the many blessings vouchsafed by the Almighty.

CHAPTER VIII.

We are gathered around the cheerful breakfast-table—of all meals the most agreeable and sociable in a house where peace and modest sufficiency exist. For my part I love to witness beyond all measure the meeting of a loving family around this grateful board. I refer naturally to this hour as alluding to a class of society whose duties are of a professional cast, or who live secure from all thought of labouring for the means of life. To witness the kiss of peace and love between the female members of the circle; the heartfelt, "good morning" of the men and the aged; the warm shake of the hand, like Nature, which, revived by the rest of night, blooms forth again with the rising sun—so does the mind regain its energy by returning day: duties are pre-

pared for, pleasures renewed, hopes revived, sorrow soothed.

Of all places that I wot of to behold this cheerful picture to perfection, select a country house amid some of the rich scenery of England. Let your room be bright and sunny; the season, welcome summer time; your windows opening on a garden, redundant with the perfume of roses and many-coloured flowers; at the head of the table, covered with a damask cloth, white as Alpine snow, place me a fair young wife or graceful daughter, who, with laughter-loving cheerfulness marked on her beaming countenance, dispenses the hospitalities of her home with all the feminine courtesies which this grateful meal permits.

It is indeed a picture worthy of the pencil of genius. And yet, fair daughters of England, permit that I, aged and grey-haired, say a few words to you, though happily you, perhaps, the least of all others in Europe, require such comments. I speak of the costume, which gains the hearts of all on such occasions. Therefore take warning. If you seek to win the love of those worthy to be your protectors, never forget the simple duties of the toilet—the more simple, if the texture become your position, the better. Carpet slippers, in the general acceptation of the term, odious; to all women they are

doubly so, if they possess that most graceful gift, a pretty foot. Dressing-gowns are abominations to female refinement, save in the dressing-room or when labouring from indisposition. Hair paper—horrid specimens of a necessary custom—which if once seen on the head of a housemaid who sweeps the staircase, she would lose her place. In fact, there is no greater proof of education and refinement in a woman, whatever her position, than her attention to elegancies of life. Without them the most beautiful and amiable of her sex would be lost to men of sensibility and mind; and truly was it advised by a wise man that we should—

> "Eat and drink to please ourselves;
> But dress to please others."

People have a continual habit of saying, "never mind dressing for dinner to day; do not trouble yourself to change,"—intending to be vastly amiable. For my part I consider that whoever gives way to such a vile and gross discourtesy to themselves, commits worse to those around them; and once the habit is engendered it becomes confirmed. Trifling as may appear these matters, they are nevertheless pleasing associations to every-day life; and being trifles, if they are neglected, worse will follow. I repeat, a fair woman who sits at the head of a cheerful breakfast table in simple elegance of attire,

having evident proofs that her glossy hair has not been neglected, and neatly ringletted or *crêpé*, (for the want of a more appropriate term in my own good language,) fresh as the morning, is a picture I love to look on; and as I sat me down to the well-supplied board, praised the omelet, which in truth was excellent, and made an attack on the bacon and eggs, which Clifford declared were as unlike and as far superior to London eggs as a well-fed dorking to a barn-door fowl, in one voice we exclaimed that our kind-hearted entertainer only wanted a fair partner to prepare the tea while he prescribed for his patients, to make him the most enviable of rural practitioners.

"True," he replied, wiping his spectacles, and altering the usual gentle expression of his countenance with a nervous twist, whether of pain or custom would be difficult to say, "My life indeed would run more smoothly were I blessed with female society; but I must gain the consent of two parties—one that will love me sufficiently to share my monotonous lot among these woodlands; the other my good housekeeper, who would not readily be persuaded to admit what she would term an intruder on her territories. The very mention of matrimony puts her out for a week. However, I must think of it, for truly the lot of man alone,

even in the midst of Nature's beauties, (for which blessed be God!) without he have some gentle voice to echo his delights, or dwell with him in admiration of such scenes, is sad.

"But come, gentlemen, the morning advances; my trusty Grissle stands harnessed at the door; the birds sing merrily without. Let me introduce you to the neighbouring spots of interest. In the Valley of Sweet Waters, through which the golden horn flows from the Bosphorus, there are some wide-spreading, graceful and magnificent palm trees, beneath whose shady branches many an idler from the city of Constantinople reclines in luxuriant ease and, passing many an hour in a dream of life, builds castles in the air, as unstable and as fleeting as the smoke of his pipe."

About two p.m. we found ourselves similarly occupied. Truly the leaf of the palm tree protected us not from the heat of the sun's rays, nor did we mingle the perfumed tobacco of the East with the fresh air. For all that, like those from the city, we lay on turf soft as the softest velvet, green as the leaf of early corn in spring, such as no subject of the Sultan ever looked on or imagined from the pinnacle of Fancy. This was our carpet—what from the looms of Turkey or Persia could presume to match it? Above, with stillness of leaf almost

solemn, spread the aged and knotted branches of three superb English oaks. Traveller, speak truly, in all your wanderings did you ever behold aught among the children of the forest that surpass them? Here beneath their shade we reclined, and beheld below a scene which in vain, in all its glorious outline of wood, vale and water, am I enabled to paint. Be it as it may, if not an eastern valley of sweet waters, it was one which to contemplate might soften the hardest heart; at all events, as I there lay watching long the winding stream, listening to the low of the distant herds of cattle, and admiring the numerous little rural churches, seen nowhere but in merry England, I turned my eyes towards the blue vault of Heaven and inwardly prayed for strength to turn my heart there also. "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?" In fact, when we behold the beauties of Nature, instead of calling us from God, it ought to make us cling to Him with unutterable love, in gratitude for blessings vouchsafed to us here, and a firm hope, through faith, in His mercies hereafter. But man! what are thy works? One moment you erect a temple, not to glory, but to satisfy your own absorbing pride or add to the worldly distinction which Mammon alone has enabled you to obtain.

OUR HALTING-PLACE.

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"Worth a pilgrimage to Mecca!" exclaimed Clifford, "in a hair shirt and sandals. What glorious weather! What scenery! Here could I build a castle, beneath these wide-spreading oaks, something more lasting than those which have floated away in the clouds of this cigar—a present from him who, exiled from his boyhood from my home, but not my heart, is still a wanderer. I would unfurl the banner of De Clifford on yon battlement, and when I fired a signal gun it should be that my followers in yon golden vale should muster for the field."

"For a week, did such weather last," said the Doctor, laughing, "all would go with you merry as a marriage bell; and then you would fly away again with railway flight to the great city of the world, where men devoted to the world's enjoyments can alone be satisfied."

"Well, there is some truth in what you say; but I am gratefully cheered with this scene; the more so that it is soothing to my senses after what we have seen this morning. It was my belief—a belief, I fear me, too readily received into the imaginations of we dwellers in cities—that feudalism was a word scarcely remembered, much more in practical existence in this free country; but I find I am in error. There are serfs—the serfs of Mammon,

not of chivalry and ancient lineage—even dwelling in your valley of sweet waters."

"How so?"

"Why, is not all we have seen to-day proof convincing as that the brilliant sun is God's work? What say you to that bijou of a church, to which you so kindly introduced us? Beautiful, I admit; a charming toy; gilded and painted to admiration; a rare specimen of Tractarian opulence and ease, in this the nineteenth century. What say you to those magnificent farm-houses—fit residences, believe me, for squires of the olden time, and better than the roof-tree beneath which half the gentlemen of England live at home in ease. For my own part, however others may differ from such an opinion, it is ever a source of sorrow to behold thousands lavished on the decoration of a church, far more so on such a little bauble as that we have beheld. I would fain believe that had the money expended on paint and gold-leaf raised a plain building to God's glory, instead of a temple to man's vanity, it would be somewhat more acceptable to Him who looks for the offering of man's heart in humble adoration, instead of the opening of his purse-strings to satisfy his craving vanity. But enough of this. It is not for me to question the right of others to do their will with their own;

yet when I hear of the labourer's wants, the large districts without religious instruction, it is worse than error to erect such toys as that."

"I cannot deny but your judgment is correct. It matters little, however, whether we kneel in a gilded temple or beneath these aged oaks in prayer, so that the prayer come direct from the heart of him who prays—more, the mere fact of kneeling humble, though doubtless the position conveys no fact of the heart's humility. A form—a mere form; and believe me, all forms save those directed by an earnest spirit are worthless. Nevertheless, the man who builds from his own means a temple to God, may do so with a willing spirit."

"It is not yours to judge; so let that pass. My object was to show you the beauties of our neighbourhood. You admit that Nature has not been sparing; and Art is not Nature—the ideal which inspires it."

"Truly; yet those farm-houses again. Do they not convey to the mind the spirit of the worst of all aristocracies—the aristocracy of money? And for what purpose are such palaces erected? Far better to build houses suitable to those who reside therein. Half the farmers in the country would be equally happy in homes far more humble. Give a man a roof above his head beyond his means,

it becomes unsuitable, perhaps ruinous to him. Without education, or with little, he seeks not to vie with those above him; but the moment the vanity of the world takes possession of his heart, farewell all the truthful, frank and generous habits of the English yeomen. Take my word for it: keep the old farm-houses in good homely repair. Let the tenant have his land on terms in justice to his landlord and himself; and in doing that justice to him, compel him to do equal justice to his labourer. Fine houses for farmers, gable-ends, bad sherry, late dinners, and such like—all balderdash. Believe me, they wish them not. A splendid field of luxuriant corn, a fine score acres of turnips, a heavy mow from the meadow lands,—these are the pictures they love to dwell on. Leave the castles on earth or in air to the landlord. Those gabled dwellings are vastly agreeable specimens of architecture; yet I doubt me if they be not fairer sights to the millionaire, who points out their perfections to the visitor from the great city, than to him who has to provide tables and chairs to fill them. I have I confess a friendship for the humble tiller of the ground. It is indeed a pleasing sight to behold a stalwart Englishman who guides the plough and whistles by the way. It leads one to hope that the heart is light; alas! I greatly fear it might be made

far more so if the improvement of property was so directed as to improve the position of the people—a popular term generally made use of in late years, but I desire you to understand it as the labourers of the field."

Here I joined the conversation, with a hearty acquiescence in Clifford's sentiments, adding that fewer things had gratified me more of late than the reply which a Noble Duke had made to his cottagers, who had presented him with an address of thanks for his attention to their household comforts in the erection of several very comfortable cottages on his estate:—

"It has been well and truly said that 'property has its duties as well as its rights.' In recognising that principle to its fullest extent I consider the well-being, the moral and social improvement, of those who live and work upon our estates are among the foremost. But if property has its rights and its duties, it has also its pleasures as well as its cares; and among the highest of those pleasures I must ever rank the means a landlord possesses of improving the habitations, and thereby bettering the condition of his fellow-creatures among the labouring class. The most gratifying reward he can receive is in such testimony as that now presented to me. We have all our respective parts

allotted to us in this world; and if I have endeavoured to fulfil mine by providing you with better cottages, let it be yours to prove yourselves worthy of them by your care of him."

These are noble sentiments from a true nobleman, and the picture he paints of duty to the humblest class, I own, is a trifle in comparison. The illustration of big farm-houses, to attract a capitalist on the land, who eke out with a grudging hand the hard-earned wages of the labourer, that they may the better be enabled to pay the high rental consequent on a landlord's ostentatious outlay for such uncalled-for habitations. But the distant tower in yon woodlands reminds me that he who dwells there as lord and master is ever ready to listen to the poor man's wants and sorrows; and I cannot but agree with him that the most effectual, as by far the most noble, way of supplying those wants, is by enabling him to support himself by the labour of his head or hands.

But we are moralizing here on our neighbour's misdoings, entirely forgetting our own. So good friends all, ladies fair and gentlemen of high degree, turn for once your thoughts towards this tranquil valley of sweet waters; and be your sentiments what they may,—however they may cling to the pleasures of the great city or to more homely

pursuits—still will you find a picture of Nature that Claude could never paint in its simple beauty or the pen of man describe. And if so, I cannot admit the justice of the merit awarded to those who spend thousands in the decorations of a church, and yet refuse their mite to aid the hand of industry, to prove the dignity and happy results of labour. Yet, for all that, the outward acts do not ever prove the inward feelings. So go and beheld that little gilded temple in the West; and if

THE CROSS, CASTLE COMBE.

the sight be to you as was it to me, like the sight of some elaborately-decorated Roman devotional,

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for all that it is worthy a visit and does full justice to the painters and gilders thereon employed. And while in thought you compare it with some of our simple and unostentatious village churches, you may also bear this in mind,—there's more true enlightenment, there's a higher purpose and a nobler view of life, in the humblest English village than in the proudest halls of the Eternal City.

But now, most worthy member of the College, while we recline beneath this roof tree of Old England's oaks, with the blue vault of Heaven for a canopy, and a carpet stretching out to yon valley such as the looms of the world could never approach in beauty, favour us with the tale of the Cross, and add another gratification to the many we are already indebted to you for.

CHAPTER IX.

"Shall I begin then, friends mine, according to olden times, (for my tale relates to days when these aged trees were in their infancy or acorns of the forest,) "once upon a time"—or, as we have it in this educational era—by some Hebrew quotation? Neither. Well, be it according to your desire. Where once yon modern castle stands which now so romantically peeps in the distance from the rich woodlands, well nigh a league I fancy from the spot where we three so peacefully ruralize, there stood—at least so history tells us—so far back as the reign of King Stephen, one of nobler pretensions, built by Walter De Dunstanville. The structure appears to have occupied the whole summit of the hill, and you may even now behold remains of the intrench-

ments formed for its defence, sufficient to indicate its original strength and importance. At what period it was dismantled cannot now be ascertained, but it must have been prior to the commencement of the fifteenth century, when Castle Combe was noted for a custom once generally observed, but which appears to be dwindled into the annual pic-nics which are still held there, as I believe having already named, by permission of the liberal owner of the domain.

"At the time of which I speak, however, the inhabitants used to meet annually, about Whitsuntide, at what was then termed a 'Church-all,' with the laudable intent of distributing alms to the indigent, and at the same time to give vent, by amusement, to those joyous feelings which all noble actions must necessarily inspire. Aubrey, who mentions this custom, supposes it to have originated from the Agapæ, or love feasts of the primitive christians. If such were the case, the blessed feelings which inspired the good villagers were worthy of all praise; and joyous I trust were the hearts of those who met to dance by the light of the moon in proportion to the good acts of charity their hearts dictated. If so be, however, that the Agapæ of the neighbouring county take its idea from such a data, I can only say, if report speak

truly, they have made a most detestable error by turning Christian acts into selfish and sensual abominations, which the Government would be justified in overhauling.

"Be it as it may, the castle is supposed to have stood in its present foundation when the gallant Sir John Fastolf, who had married Milicent, the widow of one Stephen Scrope, became in her right possessed of the rich domains you observe lying yonder in the vale below. Now, Sir John Fastolf, K.G., was a courtier of renown, bold and chivalrous —a man who loved the good things of this life, and equally loved to share them with his neighbours; a fact the more to be credited, when I tell you that he is supposed to be no less a personage than the prototype of the immortal bard's Falstaff.

"Falstaff, forsooth! The very mention of his name fills my heart with gratitude to Shakespeare. How many a way has he beguiled me; how many a day of sorrow has he helped to make cheerful; how often has he caused the winter's bright fire to burn more cheerfully, the summer's storm to fall as a refreshing shower of the moment, though it lasted for long hours, while I have been in friendly converse with the treasures of thy glorious mind! Shakespeare! thy great name strikes to the very heart's core with delight and admiration; and yet

how many thousands, aye, tens of thousands, are there who dwell through the livelong day on the veriest trash that printer's eyes were ever wearied in deciphering, but have never perused a line of thy glorious productions—of thy unrivalled and unequalled genius. Falstaff! thy name fills my mind with memories long passed. Forgive me for this quotation:—

"Go fetch me a quart of sack, and put a toast in't. Have I lived to be carried in a basket like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown into the Thames? Well; if I be served such another trick I'll have my brains ta'en out, and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a bitch's blind puppies—fifteen i' the litter; and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking. If the bottom were as deep as hell I should go down. I had been drowned but that the shore was shelvy and shallow—a death that I abhor, for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swell'd! I should have been a mountain of mummy."

By the lance I am called on to wield in the arms truly of my neighbours, I feel that for the great bard I could have shivered one in the lists, were it

only to uphold the superiority of his wit over all men living or dead I wot of."

"Well done, gentle Esculapius," exclaimed Clifford; "forsooth, I fancy after all you have selected a profession ill befitting your high sense of chivalry in war and admiration of the *belles lettres*. Thoroughly, however, do I agree with you in reference to that great mind, who so true, so perfect, in his delineation of the virtues and errors of man, and equally true to Nature." But proceed, I beg of you. We are all eagerness for the sequel of your story."

"Be it so; but the recollections of the great poet have almost banished all else from my ever flighty memory. Yet the thought of sweet Anne Page brings me to the knight, and of him I was speaking. Yet permit me first a refreshing draught from this mountain stream. I will fancy it a bottle of sack, brewed by Mistress Quickly, and drink to the memory of him who in the hearts of men will never die. But of the knight, a soldier both generous and jovial—he was wont, such report at least declares, to make the old castle merry with hospitality; and if one stone of its foundations could but rise and speak, I fancy many a tale could be told whose strange reality and interest would far surpass all fiction. Need I tell you, gentlemen,

who partake of what are termed the pleasures of aristocratic society, that even in these days of true freedom, when the voice of the humblest man who lives is permitted to speak his mind; the baronial halls of the land we live in are open to the hospitable meetings of friends and neighbours, and when the leaf of summer falls the fires blaze right cheerily in kitchen range and festal hall; and could we but peep into the interior of many of these splendid homes, we should there witness noble dames and the fairest of England's daughters gathered together in daily communion with ministers of state, chieftains of high renown, lords and commoners of high degree, and lovely children. So was it then, in ruder though by no means in less hospitable abundance in the time of our forefathers.

"On one of these occasions Sir John had gathered around him a gracious company. Whether the bold knight was truly the personification of him of the Buck Basket, you will pardon me for not asserting, for I had not the honour of his personal acquaintance. Moreover, he might, or might not have been as portly in person or as addicted to the pleasures of life as is recorded. At all events, fancy him as I am willing to do, save in the fact of his somewhat over despotic bearing—probably the fashion of the times in which he lived. With his

death, however, or rather the demolition of the castle, even such proceedings appear to have vanished, for a more generous and liberal race do not exist than those who now lay claim to the ancestral line.

"It was long, long years now flown—I scarcely know how many, probably three centuries—that a gay party might be seen assembled in the flat park land beneath yon wooded hill. Sir John, mounted on a large black hunter or war-horse, led the van: By his side, on a white palfrey, rode a beauteous lady, young and fair as the lily which grows by the streamlet's side. Following in company were gentlemen and fair ladies of all degrees, who, visiting at the castle, had gone forth on that beautiful, bright morning, for the hunting of the hawk—a graceful and healthful pastime, which has well nigh for ever vanished from our father land, save in the memory of the past, which memory however is kept alive in the person of the Lord High Falconer to Her Majesty Victoria and the occasional efforts made to restore the sport. Gallantly they rode, that merry party, followed by pages, falconers and led horses. Fancy them, if you will it, or request Landseer or Taylor to draw you a picture, graced by their genius, which this ill-conditioned pen of mine will scarcely permit me to sketch to the life,

though as I look on the vale the pageant passes before me. Joyously they rode along the winding stream, feathers flying and horses prancing—a right gladsome party. Yet, if my eye deceive me not at this distance, he who now casts the many-coloured fly so skilfully on the surface of the same rippling stream which rippled then, centuries long since, as it now glides on—with his head covered by that most light and serviceable yet vulgarly named 'wide-awake,' has more of the true sportsman at heart and more desire to obtain it as delightful pastime than any of that calvacade which I have endeavoured to place before you, though his object is skilfully to entrap the speckled trout, while they flew at higher game—the heron and the eagle. But yet not seldom was the shaft wilfully misdirected to pierce the heart of many a gentle dove. In fact, smile though you may, Linton, these hawking parties were merely pleasant, exciting, out-door pastimes—good occasions for love-making, under the bright heavens and beneath the woodland's shade, where many a fair girl lost her heart and many a gallant swore falsely to the loss of his. Such was a hawking party of the olden times, when bright eyes looked love instead of watching the towering heron in the sky, or the dart of the eager hawk on his prey; and many a tender word

passed lips beautiful as the rose-bud, many a gentle pressure of the hand was received and returned, while pretended gallantry assisted in the holding of the reins; and still more graceful attention passed when the favourite cavalier was permitted to place the lady of his love on the saddle of her impatient steed or, as were she a child, lift her with courteous care to the ground.

"Not that there was not, not that there is not, immense excitement in hawking—a right regal sport, though of all that I know of apparently the most cruel; for does it not touch the heart to watch two of the same species fighting for life in mid air, till towering they fall, and fall to rise no more? And yet, though I have endeavoured to believe, and do believe, that more gallantry than sport took place on such occasions, still there were many who loved the sport of hawking with as much passion as do we in these days of civilization the hunting of the fox; and many a fair lady too joined with eagerness in the pursuit, when a tale of love, though pleasing to the ear, was only an additional excitement to the scene. And such was the pleasure of the fair lady who rode by the side of the gallant knight on that merry morning. 'In good truth, Sir John,' she said, 'your herons are ill protected, or your falconers are unworthy of their calling. Is

it not the will of his Grace the King that this melancholy bird should be ranked among the royal game, and be protected as such by the laws? And yet we have ridden through the whole of your home domain without a rise, or even the sign of a bird, though I am assured you rigorously preserve them.' 'I do so, fair lady—not the less that they provide for me moments like the present, by your fair side—for well I know when you honour my ancient abode the sport is as exciting to your ladyship as to me the joy of admiring those bright eyes. But patience, I beseech you; should we meet with no success here, we willl pass through the village on towards Slaughter-ford, and there the country becomes more open. Anything for your pleasure, dear lady. I will even dismiss my falconers, so be it you imagine the fault lies with their carelessness that no hawk has yet been slipped.' 'Fie, fie, Sir Knight; I am no tyrant in love or sport. What would the Lady Milicent say, did she hear all the flattering praises you bestow on me? As for your falconers, good men! 'tis not for them to provide herons at will; the more so, as we have been daily served with them at your lavish board.' Sir John appeared highly amused, for well he knew the young lady, who, shaking her golden locks aside, cantered onwards on her beautiful palfrey,

cared little for the jealousy of the Lady Milicent, in comparison to the attentions she received. So, pressing on his well-trained charger, he rode side by side with her along the stream. Still no heron ere they reached the Park gates, passing through which they approached the ancient church, where they beheld the worthy rector, and confessor to Sir John, who, standing at the porch, hailed the sporting party with a morning welcome. 'Holloa!' exclaimed the knight, 'how fares it with you, Hones? Will your reverence join our hawking party this bright morning? We have a fitting company of ladies fair and gallant cavaliers, as you see. No! Well, then, we give you welcome at the Castle at the hour of dinner. We have a noble haunch, sent by the Abbot of Malmesbury, just fit for the spit, with fat lying firm and white an inch thick at least. To this we will add a heron —for I shall surely find one below the mill—well stuffed with pippins, and seasoned with a glass of Burgundy, well flavored even for a Cardinal. What say you, friar?' 'I will be punctual at the hour, Sir Knight; much thanks to your nobility, and success attend your sport!' And the friar did, as friars now do—crossed himself, and rejoiced that the day was not one of fasting, and that he should therefore be enabled to take advantage of the good cheer offered without requiring absolution.

"Onwards the gallant party rode, receiving as they cantered through the little village the respectful homage of the serfs and good dames who came forth from their door-ways to admire the passing cavalcade. On the left stood the abode of the grey friar, its outward appearance causing the imagination to dwell on the comfort which doubtless reigned within. Now, good friends, a half-dilapidated cluster of cottages, still termed the Rectory —though forsooth the modern building provided by the generosity of the present patrons—is an abiding-place which any man might envy, backed by a wide space, the receptacle of lumber and rubbish, but which then formed a court-yard, behind which stands a ruined barn, o'ershadowed by luxuriant and lofty woods, in the midst of which the whole hamlet reposes. The friar's abode was not, however, the only building whose outward appearance caused a passing glance; for now, where many a woodbine and rose-covered cottage, whose pleasant gardens filled with many-coloured flowers are washed by the sparkling trout stream, there might in the good knight's time be seen several snug and well-conditioned houses of a better class. In one of these, whose well-kept lawn bordered the water, lived one who in our times would be termed a retired gentleman—one perhaps who has served his country well, either in the civil service, or more

probably in the well-fought battle field, to retire wounded and maimed for life on a small pittance doled out to him by a country who begrudges this hard-earned means of existence to those who have so greatly contributed to place that country in the prominent position it now so proudly holds."

"True, true," said Clifford; "like an old war-horse, no longer able to work, is given to the hounds."

"To continue, however. This owner's name was Dunstanville; a man of good bearing and, for the times, of some learning, if he could not boast of wealth; such a man as might be welcomed anywhere by his class, and would so be in our time. 'Twas said he had travelled far, and had knowledge of the Foreigner; moreover, he bore the character of a brave and generous Christian. Thus, though he lived retired and apparently had some hidden cause of sorrow, he was respected by many, and among them Sir John rarely passed his abode without giving him 'Good day.' On this bright morning he stood in the midst of his flowers, as the cavalcade rode down through the village; when the Knight, reining in his horse, thus saluted him: 'How fares the times with you, Dunstanville? A bright and a glorious morning for a hawking party—such is our intended sport.' Dunstanville raised his cap, and returned the courteous salute: 'Almost too bright, Sir Knight; for the sun, dazzling the eyes of the

hawks, often causes them to miss the stoop. For all that, you will find plenty of herons beyond the mill of Hazel. If not, ride forward towards Longdean, and thence through Ford, for the silver vale by Mount Schilly, to the border of Slaughterford.' 'Aye, Slaughterford,' said the Knight, 'a battle-field. Methinks, good friend, you have ridden in the van in many a gallant charge, though little you say on the subject. But what of your fair daughter, Cicely?—speaking of dazzling suns and bright eyes! Her's are as bright as the sun itself, and forsooth as blue as the vault of Heaven. Bid her come hence, that these fair dames may witness perfection in their race and that the young cavaliers—my visitors, who follow in my train—may be gladdened by such a picture, and lose their hearts.'

"Now Cicely, the only child of Dunstanville, was the idol of a doating father's heart. He lived but for her, and had no hope but that of administering to her happiness, no fear but dying ere he could consign her to the protection of one he considered worthy of her. As he loved her, so had he loved her mother, who having died some four years previously, he had retired to this one of Nature's beautiful seclusions, to draw nearer to his heart the fond memory of her who was no more—in his devotion to one whom God had left to gladden his remaining days. Whatever the devotion of the

father to the daughter, that of the daughter to the father was as beautiful in feeling as in practice; and here amid the woodlands they passed their happy, peaceful and contented life, amid their books and flowers, kind and charitable to all, yet associating with few; indeed, save the grey friar, rector of Combe, few ever shared their humble hospitality or society. Dunstanville, nevertheless, had seen something of courts and courtiers. Alas! too much; and the young Cicely had not ever mingled solely with the rose-bloom and carnation. Still how contentedly sped their days, even in this seclusion, with her parent! When the winter's snow hung on the woodlands, and the day's light shortened into long evenings, she read aloud, or listened to tales of the unquiet times; when the summer's sun gladdened all Nature, her flowers and her out-door pursuits were joy to her; when the rich autumn fruits hung in profusion on her woodland vales, she might truly say—

> 'On such scenes as this
> The vial of the Almighty wrath
> Hath not, as e'er the rebel city, burst."

Or,

> 'Such scene is here; for who that distant views
> Yon richly-tinted forest could perceive
> Aught but the loveliest hues of Nature there?
> Softly the sober morn with yellow blends
> And gorgeous red commingles—colours bright,
> So nicely meeting those of duskier hue,
> That it would seem a labour infinite
> To range each simple leaf thus skilfully.'

"And spring, the beautiful heart-cheering harbinger of summer, fresh as the innocence of her young mind—precursor of earth's gladness and God's goodness—when the labour of the husbandman is rewarded a hundred-fold, and all Nature, true to the Maker's word, yields to the industry of man and proves the dignity of labour,—'tis then Flora spreads a carpet bedecked with flowers, spun in Nature's loom, more exquisitely lovely than the hand of man could form, with all his genius; and in such scenes as these lived the young maiden and him whom she revered for himself, as in memory of her much-loved mother—love, save the love of God, made more precious for the bounties He conferred in Nature's beauties on man—none other had ever touched her heart.

"But she comes from beneath the jasmine and rose-covered porch uncalled, unconscious that a gay cavalcade of cavalier sportsmen stood before her home, hastening to join her father in the garden on that bright morning—one which in after years was often called to memory with mingled joy and sorrow. Indeed she little imagined how many a bold eye glanced on her fair form from beneath flowing plumes and hunting caps—eyes accustomed to look with a gaze to which she had been but rarely accustomed—young, innocent, and beautiful, yet of high spirit and mind far beyond the position in

which she was placed—though she lived not for the time with them or among them; yet finding herself so placed, none knew better how to demean herself—few were so graceful, few in such presence more capable of subduing any attempt at proud or uncourteous bearing.

"Sir John, the leader of the party, even bowed low as he gave her greeting; and the lady by his side deigned also to lower her aristocratic head, though, if the truth were told, a jealous pang passed through her heart at the sight of one who, if she was considered of another class, in outward form and grace was in all respects her superior. Recollect, however, in other times, the distinction of position was as widely marked as it is now most absurdly amalgamated—an amalgamation, in its present spirit, scarcely less than injurious was feudalism and despotism to be abhorred; yet how difficult, alas! how impossible, to define it! The uneducated and ignorant have as erroneous an idea of true nobility of mind and birth as have thousands better informed a thorough contempt for all nobility save the aristocracy of wealth. Mammon is their only thought—their only coveted station—their sole desired heritage. True is it that many have defamed the honoured name which their forefathers may have won in some well-fought battle-

field, or by some still more noble qualities of mind; yet how few are they among the many admirable, high-minded, charitable and benevolent of the higher class throughout the land we live in. Say nay who will, a more noble, high-minded, generous and charitable race does not exist than those who have the right, by birth and mind, not Mammon, to number themselves as of the peerage of Old England—men who never turn their hearts against the poor, or those, from whatever class they may have sprung, worthy of their friendship and protection. And I, though but a humble shoot from the great tree of nobility, hugging to my heart as I do all opinions tending to the civil and religious liberty of the people of this great kingdom, confess that I desire never to witness the day —and come it never will while England remains true to herself—that the titles of this race of descendants from the Saxon and the Norman conquerors shall be erased from the land; though, to confess in all truth, I would desire to number among the former rather than the latter, as I have never clearly ascertained the pride of descent from a Foreign land.

"But Cicely Dunstanville, whether descended from the Saxon or the Norman line, was one of Nature's fairest daughters. Graceful in person,

graceful in mind, firm in purpose and affectionate in heart; and though thoroughly sensible, as are all women, of just admiration, she sought only the admiration bestowed by those from whom to receive it was no dishonour, and not such as proceeds from the idle gallantry of the ignorant and unfeeling.

"Abashed for one moment she stood before the gaily-attired and hilarious hawking party, in whose presence she had thus unexpectedly found herself; then, returning with much grace and dignity the courteous salute of the knight, as of the lady by his side, and glancing her large blue eyes towards the remainder of the cavaliers and ladies, added her wishes to those of her father, that their sport might prove successful."

But I must leave the sequel for another chapter.

CHAPTER X.

"Wishing all happiness to Dunstanville and his daughter, the party rode forward, save one, a young man bordering on thirty, of highly prepossessing manner and graceful bearing. He rode a splendid hunter, which appeared all eagerness to stretch its sinewy limbs in the chase, though not insensible that he it bore was the master, which well he proved by the graceful manner in which he sat in the saddle, as with the gentle hand he controlled his noble horse, while he lingered behind his companions, apparently to have one more word with Dunstanville and one more glance at his fair daughter; but this was ineffectual, for they had turned towards the house; and Cicely, with her arm around the neck of her father, and the other

on the head of a noble hound, was very soon deep in the mysteries of flowers and other simple delights, and had already well-nigh forgotten Sir John and his hunting party, who, riding briskly through the village, passed along Rack Hill, towards Longdean. 'Well, my Lord, what think you of our Wiltshire lasses?' said a bluff Squire, who affected court airs, as the young man I have just named, putting his horse at a high timber fence, landed in the next field, as had a bird flown over it. 'Well, my Lord, does your experience of courts enable you to say nay to my assertion, that a fairer form than her's we have just been greeted with ne'er listened to a tale of love?' 'Fair indeed,' replied the noble gentleman, who for the times in which he lived was not unmindful that to sustain the rank which he bore it was necessary to do something more than flaunt in fine clothes at court festivals; he had therefore early joined the army, and fought with much gallantry and honour; moreover his heart was kind and generous, for all that. He was at times led away, as are most men in his station, in the race of selfish pleasure; and a beautiful woman, more particularly in a position that he considered utterly distinct from his own, was as fair game as the heron that now rose slowly from beneath the mill of Hazel, to the joy of the party. 'By Saint

Hubert de Lille,' added the noble Lord, as again he put spurs to his gallant horse (for the squire belonged to that family, of which he might well be proud) 'in truth the girl is beautiful and graceful, beyond question; yet, if I err not, there is something in those large blue eyes and fair pale face which speaks of character and mind such as will listen to no love tales from such as you and I, members of a licentious court and overbearing squirearchy. But onwards, or we lose the chase! The gallant hawk strikes his quarry for a crown! Watch how he towers already above his prey! Look well to it, poor heron—you are already doomed,' he exclaimed, as once more passing most of the riders the splendid animal on which he was mounted crossed the brook below the mill of Longdean, in his stride thus distancing his companions. 'By St. George he strikes—a good omen! Yes, fair Cicely; one look at those blue eyes,—one look at that fair countenance, whosoe'er you be. My heart already yearns towards you. Struck to the very death!' he added, and not without some feeling, as hawk and heron, heron and hawk, whirled in mid air and then fell heavily at his feet. To leap from his horse and release the heron from its destroyer was but the work of an instant, and readily performed by those accustomed to the sport, as was

the noble lord. Then, taking the bridle in hand, he walked to meet the falconers and party.

"'Well done, my noble lord,' said the knight; 'a splendid bird, and gallantly struck! What say you, fair ladies, shall we try for another long-neck or pass through the woodlands for the castle?' 'Another chase, by all means!' echoed the whole party. 'The sun is still high in the West, and all Nature here is bright to the eye; and,' added the good-humoured squire we have named, 'while this fresh air adds charms to those already so fair, by my faith exercise is the best sauce I wot of to secure an appetite for the promised haunch; so give rein to your palfreys, sweet ladies, and see who shall first witness the death of one of those birds which I see yonder by the water's bank.' Suffice it, another heron rose, another hawk was slipped for the prey, and another heron died; and with renewed merriment the party crossed the small river below Ford, and, skirting the Wraxhall woods, passed the homestead, termed "The Shrub"—why, those who live their best can tell the reason—descended through the beauteous golden vale of Combe, and, winding up yon steep side, dismounted before the castle portals.

"'Pardon me, dear lady,' said the bluff, but courteous knight, throwing himself heavily from

the saddle, 'one moment, till I give you aid. There, you are free from the stirrup; be not too hasty, or you may injure those fairy feet and ancles, which honour the very earth on which they tread, but were made, by my knighthood, only to press the pile of a velvet carpet from the looms of Lyons or from Persia.' 'Fie, fie, Sir John,' she replied, not insensible to admiration, as common to her ears as the wind of heaven, at the same time casting a sidelong glance at the noble young lord, who, dismounting from his gallant steed, remained as if in thought—at least as if unmindful that he was in the presence of gay ladies, yet far less fair than was the gentle being on whom he had gazed with admiration that morning, and whom he had also fully determined to see again.

"Two hours are passed, and in a noble hall, the walls of which were surrounded by banners and armour and other trophies of war, on which the rays of the golden sun cast its dazzling hues, the same party were again assembled at the festive board, with the addition of the Lady Milicent, some gentlemen of high repute belonging to the neighbourhood, and the grey friar, Hones, rector of Combe, dressed in his clerical garb, and awaiting with anxious expectation the onslaught on the fat and savoury haunch. It would be difficult, my

friends, clearly to explain to you the hospitality of days of which I speak. I may fairly say, however, if the same spirit of refinement, elegance, and French cookery reigned not then as in our time, forsooth food in sufficient quantity was not wanting. Wine in abundance ceased not to flow. Term it a dinner if you will, for such it would be now, or a supper—all the same, to some of the party at least, who thought far more of the savoury dishes and the sparkling bumpers at the moment than all else in life. Yet the thoughts of some among the number were far away; and to others the happiness nearer at hand not less engrossing. The ladies, having removed their riding-gear, were dressed in all the splendour of the time consistent with their rank; the gentlemen no longer jingled in spurs and plumes, but were still in gallant attire. For my part, fair or plain, I know of no more graceful costume than the riding-habit of modern days—not, however, the riding-habit with an extra flounce or mainsail, that tailors have invented I presume to charge for extra cloth, but the plain, well-made, graceful habit worn by the lady who has a lady's taste to wear it. The man's hat, with the addition of a rosette or dahlia stuck on one side, is as odious to the sight as the cap—the unsuitable flower-pot—worn by our gallant soldiers; and the 'Wide-a-

wake,' (odious name for a most useful head-piece,) though a trifle better, particularly if a roguish eye and a pouting lip peep from beneath it, still requires a somewhat aristocratic touch of the hand of taste to make it what I would with all humility desire to see it on a lady's head.

"But I ramble from ancient halls to the parks and bye-lanes of Merry England, where in spring and summer time—aye, in mid winter and autumn too—more fair women and fine horses, well dressed and well ridden, may now be seen than through the length and breadth of civilized Europe; and it is methinks as beautiful a picture as the eye of man need dwell on.

"The lady who during the morning's sport had been the knight's companion now sat on his right, dressed somewhat more splendidly than the time and place required. 'Tis possible she had a heart to lose, or that she had lost it, though unrequited, to him who, though beseeming his rank was most simply attired, held the same place by the side of the Lady Milicent. The Squire De Lille, full of good humour and courteous bearing, seated between two other ladies, conversed merrily of the morning's sport, while the whole party thus assembled were as cheerful as such parties ought to be, and as I should wish they ever were.

"Grace being said by the friar, the good things under whose weight the board groaned were done full justice to at least so goes my tale. 'Trout, fresh from my preserve—rosy, my lady, as the blush on your cheek, wafted by the morning's breeze; and pike, white and fine, filled with pudding fit for a Prior on fast-days. What say you, Hones?' But dinners are dinners still, as were they then, save that a trifle more of mind is thrown into the manner of enjoying them, and less of sensuality. In fact, men in high life eat rather in appreciation of the artiste than with any consideration of the abundance. What say you, Soyer? While many an English cook, probably your equal, if not your superior, in the gastronomic art, and yet possessing no Gallic name is deemed unworthy of his calling, term yourself Monsieur Fricandeau, or Volauvent, ask an income equal to that of a colonel in the army, wear a paper cap and a snow-white apron, and you will out-Soyer Soyer.

"Numerous were the measures of claret and Burgundy discussed, and endless the incisions made in the noble haunch, while the heron, stuffed with pippins, vanished bodily. Merry were the assembled party, all save one. He had been struck, as the hawk had struck his prey, deep to the heart's core. Sir John was joyous and hospitable; and I have

heard that when the friar rose to grant a benediction on the feast he was observed to hold fast by the table;—more, that when his worthy housekeeper (for such was the fashion of the times) came with her lantern to see his reverence safe home to his dormitory, it was with much difficulty she prevented him from walking into the river or over the battlements of the bridge, instead of through the gates to his own residence. He crossed himself as he passed near to the beautiful church tower of St. Andrews, which still stands amid the woodlands; but forgetting for the moment his godly calling, the echo of sighing winds seemed to say, 'Venison, fit for a Cardinal! Give me such a haunch daily, and I will absolve thee, Sir Knight, for all thy peccadilloes, were they as countless as yon stars. Heigho, good dame! what a heron, flavoured with spice and citron!—fit eating for his Eminence the Pope—God preserve him! Trout, rosy as a lassie's lips!' Here he gave a slight-loving pinch to his worthy housekeeper, who naturally absolved him. 'Wine! what nectar! By the garb I wear, I feel somewhat mystified, or I preach in error of this wicked world. Give me but such dinners as I have eaten to-day, and I could live for ever. To-morrow, a day of fast! Bah! That means another feast. Oh! for one more cut at that glorious haunch, and I would

absolve myself.' Here he reeled, and fel against his own door. Who saw him? says man. Not one, save his companion, say I—that is, in the village; for all his parishioners had long gone to rest—even Dunstanville and his sweet child. Would she have asked that question? No; indeed no. And why? She knew little and cared less for absolution, for she numbered among the very few who then held to the faith of her mother, who was a Protestant; and when all was still save the rushing of the streamlet or the whispering of the summer leaves, she threw wide her casement and looked forth into her beautiful small garden, from which she inhaled the perfume of sweet flowers; then, casting her beautiful eyes toward the star-lit heaven, she breathed a prayer to Him from whose eye nothing is hidden, and then retiring to rest slept calmly as the infant in its mother's arms. Who forsooth required more than did this dear girl to direct her heavenly thoughts than to have read the lines, then as now daily before her in the church of her village home—words which are still there, and still to be read and engraven on the heart's core:—

> 'Christ is the only salve for everi sore;
> Learn him aright—ye neade to learne no more.'

CHAPTER XI.

"Cicely slept, undisturbed by feverish dreams, caused by the cares of life—a calm, unbroken, refreshing sleep—God's own balm, to soothe man's restless heart:

> 'Yes, sweet is night! the bruised and weary heart
> May find its respite from its miseries.'

Had any one entered that pretty chamber, where all was suited to its mistress, what a picture of sweet innocence and peace would they have looked on! Her elegant well-formed head lay cushioned on a pillow white as Alpine snow, the beautiful small ear escaping from her clustering hair, her large full eyes closed in sleep overshadowed by the long silken eye-lash, her delicate white hand thrown on the coverlet—fit model for a sculptor. May God bless

and watch over the sweet girl! Sleep on! May thy slumbers be as refreshing as thy awaking joyous! To look on such a scene, methinks, would make even the villain heart overflow with kindly feelings and remorse. The good man pray on, that sorrow ne'er be thine, or thy slumbers disturbed by sin or sickness! Look around that room, fit abiding-place for its graceful inmate, offering full proof of the taste and mind of her who slept. Her full red lips half open now move, as were she about to awake; but no—it is only a passing thought which crosses the mind even in sleep. This we term a dream.

> 'And dost thou dream that round thy dimpled mouth
> Play angels' smiles? That thus thy tiny hand
> Unclosed, as to grasp some fleeting thought,
> Then moveless falls again? Do visions pass
> The unstained portals of thy pure young mind,
> Of birds and flowers and infant joys,
> That at thy waking meet thy opening gaze?'

"The scenes and actors of the previous day flit wildly through the brain even when sleep, sound as the sleep of death, holds the weary body in a trance. Not seldom scenes far distant, persons long dead, thoughts we desire not, cross the sleeping imagination. Again we dream at seasons (I can scarce disbelieve but such is the will of God,) to warn us of approaching danger or of joy, and lead the awaking mind in some preparation for coming

events. Such has been, such may be again. Were the sleeping thoughts which passed even through the undisturbed mind of this fair girl warning her of coming events which throw their shadows before, or were they placing before her the gay cavalcade which had enlivened the village the previous day? Did she witness in that moment of dreamy delusion him who had gazed on her with such admiration? Who can say? She sleeps.

"Near the window hangs a bird-cage; its inmate also rests. When the light of morning breaks in the East once more thy joyous note, sweet bird, will awake thy fond and careful mistress to another day of life's innocent enjoyments amid her flowers and pets. Shrink not, proud ladies, in horror or disgust, which you feel not for far more unnatural fancies, when I add that, stretched on two large skins of the red deer, at the very foot of this fair girl's couch, lay a noble hound—a sentry as bold and true as those who bestride their gallant black chargers beneath the portals of the Horse Guards. Flowers of the fairest bloom bedecked her table, while over the back of a prie-Dieu, or that which would now be termed an ancient, elaborately-carved oak chair, was thrown her embroidery work, at the foot of which were carelessly placed a pair of morocco slippers—fit coverings for feet as matchless as her

hand. Books were there also; and on a small table by the bed a Bible, despite the times, lay open by her side, proving what had really been her last occupation previous to retiring to sleep. Oh! fair girl, may your life be as calm as your repose!

"Let us now turn from this picture of calm village life to that of the baronial castle. The festivities are o'er, the buttery is closed, the wine-flagon empty; lords, knights and commoners have retired; their numerous retainers, more noisy, forsooth, as more difficult to subdue by libations or gastronomic indulgence, have retired also. Do they all slumber in peace and innocence? I fear not. Let us hope so. We can only speak of one—the young Lord Badlesmere. True, no real love had entered his heart; those who imagine in such momentary feelings have never felt the true one. Nevertheless, his fancy was excited in no common degree; and this, together with the feverish feelings increased by a fatiguing day's sport and high living, was quite sufficient to destroy sleep. Add to this, his thoughts flew back to the fair girl who had delighted his eyes in the morning and—must I add? —pleased his sensual fancies. Thanks be to God, in this the year 1851 the titled and the humble cottager are estimated by their neighbours more in accordance with their acts than in regard to their

position. I speak as of the well-judging and educated mass of the people. True, there are many in whose eyes a lord is a lord, differing in all respects from all other classes; of the squire, he is judged by his rent-roll; and the cottager nothing more than a sort of being who eats bread and bacon, if he can get them, and works, if he can get work, at times but for poor remuneration. With this latter class, mind, good conduct and high principle have nought to do with the matter. A lord is a lord, a cottager a cottager. Happily, most happily, as I have already had occasion to observe, there exists not a more noble race than England's nobility of the present day, with few exceptions. And this very nobility, if the truth be known, are above all men those who most respect and are respected by the humbler class, more particularly in the rural districts. Return we to the year 1450. A lord was then all-powerful, as regards the people, to look with eyes of fancied love even on a girl of the middling class, which the daughter of a soldier of fortune might then be deemed who had fought under the banners of old England.

"To do him justice, however, Lord Badlesmere, though somewhat vain of his rank and not less so of the renown he had won by his gallantry in the field—a courtier by birth and position, and as such

not blind to the licence given to men of his class—was yet neither wanting in heart or principle. In the thoughtlessness of the moment, or carried away by feeling or any strong excitement, he was capable of committing great faults. Having committed them, however, none felt more keenly the remorse they occasioned him—none were more ready to retrieve them. Moreover, he was by no means insensible to female charms; but had those charms merely touched his senses, and not the finer feelings of his nature, by a combination of mental qualifications the fancy would have vanished as soon as created. Neither was he without discrimination of character; and even the passing view he had been enabled to take of Cicely's countenance was sufficient to cause him to believe that mere personal beauty was the very least of her charms. The sun had therefore scarcely risen above the woods which surrounded the valley over which the windows of the castle looked, than he had left his feverish couch and sought the fresh air of the park. Alone and thoughtful he walked towards the village long ere the inmates of the castle had arisen. For a moment he stopped to look on the ancient tower of St. Andrews, and then, with lingering steps, approached the residence of Dunstanville, not, as he had hoped, to watch the closed casement of Cicely,

which was already thrown open, while the inmate of the cage, which now hung without, half shrouded in jasmine and honeysuckle, was sending forth its cheerful and melodious notes. Sing on, sweet bird! thy music softens the heart of man. But her he sought was not there, he ventured to enter the little wicket and passed into the garden of many-tinted flowers. Scarcely had he crossed the lawn, however, ere he beheld the owner busy among his treasures. With the bearing natural to his race he courteously saluted the aged soldier, and with apologies for the intrusion requested permission to visit a home which outwardly offered so many charms.

"'You are welcome, my Lord, to my humble abode, or any friend of the noble knight Sir John; but methinks you will find in our simplicity little to repay you for deserting the fair ladies and gallant courtiers of the castle. But you are welcome, I repeat, to my humble abode, and do me honour.' 'I thank you. Let me ask you of your fair daughter. Some apologies are due to her for yesterday's intrusion. Why take you no part in my friend Fastolf's hospitalities? He speaks of you, doubtless as you deserve, in high praise. More, your daughter would grace his baronial halls by her presence.'

"'My Lord, you forget our station and the times. You see before you one who bears a high name, but who nevertheless has served his country, if with some honour, yet only as a soldier of fortune. More—this my beloved daughter, of whom you speak in such praise, is a member of the Protestant faith—her mother's. I have put this confidence in one whose face bespeaks honesty of mind and truth of heart. My Lord, a soldier, though young as you are, who in the blood-stained field of battle has shown such gallantry as you have, and of which I am not ignorant—one of your noble birth will not belie his rank or manhood by misconception. We live here happy in our retirement, happy in ourselves. My whole life is centred in her to whom I shall gladly make you known. We seek no courts or courtiers, though the knight of these domains treats us with all courtesy and kindness.' And with this, passing through an open door which led into his simple abode, he added, 'Cicely, my child; the Lord Badlesmere honours our humble dwelling thus early; make him welcome, and offer him a share of our morning's meal.'

"'His Lordship is kind, and I will readily do my all to make such as we have to give, less humble in comparison to that which he has left. Down, Nadir! down darling! it is a friend.'

These words she addressed to the noble hound, her faithful companion, who walking round the visitor gave one gentle growl, and then apparently satisfied with his inspection lay quietly down by his mistress. 'And you, Hawk,' she added, speaking to another pet, a remarkably small but beautiful terrier, 'show more respect to our guest.' And after this, and a welcome which would have done honour to the proudest court lady, she hastened to prepare the morning's meal.

"I cannot tell you, friends, of what that morning's meal was composed. I will leave you to convert your tea, coffee, toast and eggs into the simple yet abundant fare of the times. All was served, however, with such elegance as circumstances admitted; and if the heart of the noble visitor could have been fairly read, it would thus in words have spoken: 'If I thought the girl beautiful on whom my eyes yesterday dwelt as she stood amid her flowers, I have now discovered that that beauty was light as a feather in the scale to the charms of her mind and the grace of her bearing.' For there sat Cicely, attired in all the simplicity of her station; her fair hair hung in graceful ringlets, free from ostentatious ornament; her well-fitting attire, neat yet elegant; frank and courteous and mild her words, as she did all honour to her father's

visitor, never for an instant losing sight of the daily little endearments which belonged to him by the right of affection, and which were administered by the hand of love; and yet as apparently unconscious of the admiration which glanced from Baddlesmere's eyes as was she mindful of those loving ones with which hers were sought by the much-valued animals which lay at her feet.

"'What sport, my Lord, did our vales offer you yesterday?' said Dunstanville. 'Methought the day was somewhat too bright for a hawking party. Nevertheless, hawks such as the Knight can claim will strike even when the sun is high, for they have the eagle's eye. You rode a noble horse, such as your good father rode when he led a gallant charge, and even then the most renowned knight of the army. I have seen him in the battle-field, and honoured his name; and when I heard (for quiet as we live, tales unsought do sometimes greet us in this seclusion,) that he who rode the jet black hunter with one bound across the brook at Longdean vale was the young Lord Badlesmere, I told my Cicely 'twas only such as your noble father would have done, with lance in rest, if the enemy to his country and his rightful king had lined the opposite bank.'

"'And she fully agreed with you, that the feat

was only one that her palfrey would have performed,' replied his Lordship, 'had this splendid hound led the way in the chase of the finest pair of antlers in yonder park?'

"'Fie, fie, my Lord; you do me injustice. I love the noble animal, the horse, not less than I do these dumb, faithful brutes, under whose protection I should fear not to face the woodlands even in the darkness of night. More,—the man who partakes the courage of the gallant beast he rides, and puts not the animal's powers to a cruel test, but yet fears not to avail himself of them in the ardour of the chase, is rarely wanting in courage when the hour of danger calls him, and is ever courteous in the presence of the weaker sex.'

"Cicely uttered these sentiments as calmly as she felt them, not addressing them individually to him who drank in all her words, but in the true spirit in which they were uttered. But I must linger no longer on scenes such as these, for I have still far to wander, and the assembled party at the castle are already wondering at the young nobleman's absence. So with a friendly greeting, and the hope that their peaceful home might be again favoured with his presence—for by kind and courteous manners he had already won their respect—he bid adieu to Dunstanville and his fair daughter, and leisurely returned to the castle.

"What were his thoughts and feelings as he once more passed through the park? As they have been written, so will I disclose them.

"He had risen after a sleepless night, once more to look on the fair face of a village girl. His other intentions it would be difficult to define; but they were simply those of a young courtier whose fortune was large, whose will had rarely been contradicted, and whose successful gallantries, even among the class he lived, had rather raised him than otherwise in the estimation of those among his associates, not less so in those of many a high-born lady, to whom one tender glance or one pressure of his hand or one love token would have added happiness. He thought an hour or two daily passed in a rural flirtation would wile away the time not otherwise devoted to the chase or the pleasures of the table; and to foster a passion in the heart of a young girl whom all had spoken of in such praise after the hawking of the day previous would be only to add to the number of his gallantries.

"But I have already said Badlesmere in mind or heart was no libertine. Nature had made him far otherwise; position and associations alone had caused him to deviate from a right course, of which his fine mind, in better moments, most fully approved. Thus this slight intercourse with this fair,

kind, gentle-hearted girl had therefore at once scattered, like chaff from before the wind, all evil thoughts, all wild desires, save those naturally incited by the feelings of love and admiration; and all that was good in his nature, all that was noble, rose as a feather in life's stream, cast into the wandering river of his thoughts by her whom he had considered but one day before as he would have thought of any daughter of the people possessed of silken hair and bright blue eyes.

"And Cicely, what of her? Had the burning and all-powerful passion of real love already touched her young heart? No. Love save that of child to a fond and indulgent parent was the most powerful feeling she had hitherto experienced. More: she beheld their visitor as one so far beyond her in position, and that at an era when distinctions were most strongly defined, that the single idea of pleasing association with one whom her superior mind could truly appreciate was all that passed at the moment across her lively imagination. Therefore when Lord Badlesmere had passed from her home, as frankly and as simply as was her wont, she expressed herself warmly of his noble bearing and his pleasing courtesies. Yet who can tell what the morrow will bring forth? In baronial castles of days 'lang syne,' as in modern mansions of those

more civilized, friends came and went, sports and pastimes were enjoyed, hospitalities dispensed. And so was it at Combe. Not seldom the ancient halls echoed to the sounds of hilarity; not seldom the beautiful vales were witness to a hawking party such as we have feebly endeavoured to describe; at others the woodlands rang to the melodious voice of hounds in chase of the wild deer, which roamed at large in their natural freedom. Forsooth, if our forefathers spoke truly, the tusks of a wild boar which had been killed within two gun-shots from the castle often closed an orange or citron from foreign shores, while the head spiced and cured was borne on a large silver dish to the head of the table, when the knight would hold forth to his assembled guests on the prowess of those who had assisted in its death. Many a heron rose from the sparkling waters to rise no more. Many a stag, after bearing his branches gallantly, was brought to bay. At all these exciting moments in sport delights the young lord was first and foremost in acts of equestrian boldness and activity, as at the festive board ever courteous. Yet, as day by day advanced, he still lingered amid the woodlands, forgetting alike courts and courtiers in the joy of stolen hours with those to whom he had now become warmly attached. Each visit to their graceful home the more and

more made known the mental charms of the sweet Cicely, as did it bind him in more firm friendship to her admirable father, who as he was daily more and more gratified by his society became blind to the danger to which he was exposing his beloved child, whose heart now touched already began, not to love him less, but to feel less those simple charms derived from the tending of her flowers, and the watching with anxious solicitude the gambols and comforts of her dumb associates. How could it be otherwise? A young girl, living almost in solitude—of all things the greatest strengthener of love, if once the heart be touched—possessing a mind and heart capable of the strongest passion, and adorned with all those graces of person so eminently formed to call it forth in another! and here, amid her flowers and her pets, day by day she listened to kind and tender words, received the most affectionate attentions from one who, speaking to her of courts and campaigns, foreign lands, and home scenes strange to her ears, to which she delighted to listen, and this with such delicate care as neither to wound her heart by any act, or intrusion of his station, or better knowledge of the world. And who could blame her—as time wore on, and his footsteps were heard not, or his well-known voice speaking kindly to her noble

hound, that the mind became anxious for his absence, her eye more beaming at his approach, her ear more alive to the words which fell from his lips.

"But I must linger no longer on these scenes of love, though the charms of Nature with which the spot abounds act as a loadstone to my pen. Enough that in Cicely there lived a deep, fond, first, and all-engrossing passion—so pure and undivided that she scarce understood the emotions which overpowered her. Silent were her thoughts, deep her meditations. No longer the calm refreshing sleep that nightly closed her eyelids a few months since. Feverish were her dreams, waking her thoughts, anxious her mind to keep the secret which she so foundly cherished, even from her much-loved father. Nature filled her heart with wild hopes of happiness. Reason placed before her the apparent impossibility of their realization. But hope is in the future. To you, sweet girl, may it tell no flattering tale!

"Badlesmere drank deeply of this cup of happiness. Scarce a day passed but what he sat beneath the porch of Dunstanville's cottage in unalloyed enjoyment of the society of those now so dear to him. Yet be it joy or sorrow, it is the will of God that the herald should come when we least

expect it. A mandate from the court called him once more to scenes of busy life. It was not to be disobeyed. He went not, however, without hopes of a speedy return; and when he warmly grasped the hand of Dunstanville, and kissed with fervour the small white fingers which closed on his with affection, and watched the full blue eye, overflowing with tears at his departure, his thoughts turned to God in thankfulness that no word of unkindness, to her at least, had ever passed his lips; and his heart echoed a fervent vow that, casting aside all worldly thoughts, his life should be devoted to her happiness.

"Cicely was alone; yes, alone! even though the affection of her father was as warm as ever—her pets as faithful and as fond. Her bird sung as cheerfully, her flowers bloomed as freshly; but *he* was gone, and Cicely was alone, surrounded by Nature's beauties—charms in sorrow or in joy—with which love so willingly associates. The view of a pleasing prospect inspires the heart with the tenderest emotions. The lonely mountain, the silent grove, and the stillness of a fine evening, increase the susceptibility of the female heart. Women, indeed, feel the pure and tranquil pleasures of rural life with more exquisite sensibility than men. The softest images spring up amid wild

and beautiful scenery. The recollection of those emotions called forth by the first blush of conscious tenderness, the first gentle pressure of the hand, the slightest token of affection, is remembered and cherished. Such were the feelings of poor Cicely. She thought but of the absent one, and her fevered imagination led her often in fancy amid the pleasures of the court. By all she thought he must be beloved as he was by her—till at length the bloom left her cheek, the brightness of her eye was dimmed; but the day of sorrow once more passed—the hour of joy came, and with it Badlesmere.

"In the year 1450 the people of England were not favoured with that undeniable blessing, the Penny Postage; and railways were as obsolete in the imagination of man as the power of flight through the the air. A letter was then a curiosity, resorted to only on rare occasions by the rich and forwarded by couriers. Seldom therefore were the communications of those separated by a distance of one hundred miles—now passed in a few short hours. Brief then was the correspondence which had passed between the lovers—sufficient, however, to keep their minds alive to the tender affection which existed between them.

"The golden autumn had lapsed; the woodlands

again were leafless. The winter's rigours had come and gone once more. Spring's freshness brightened o'er the land. The notes of the blackbird and thrush were again heard filling the woodlands with their cheerful song. Even Cicely's bird sang cheerily, and the melodious note of the nightingale broke once more on the stillness of the night.

> 'Mortals learn, ere evening closes,
> From the sounds that float along,
> That not e'en a bird reposes
> Ere he sings a grateful song.'

"The sun of early summer was sinking beyond the castle, and Cicely, more depressed than usual, was lingering among her flowers. Dunstanville sat beneath the porch, with eyes fixed in tender love on his only child. A cloud hung over his usually animated countenance, for he had observed of late that the spirit of his darling, once so gay, was often subdued with anxious thought, bordering on care. At such times his heart condemned him that he had allowed their solitude to be encroached on. Still, when he thought of him they had welcomed and learnt to love, his fears vanished; for he had mixed with the world, and, judging man correctly, judged also that true feelings are as firm as the passing fancy unstable. At such a moment father and daughter were thus engaged, when the quick pace of a horse was heard

rapidly advancing up the village. The well-known black hunter stood foaming before the wicket, and the horseman throwing himself from the saddle hung the reins on the paling and vaulted into the garden. A moment more and Cicely's hand was locked in that of her lover, who was warmly welcomed by her father.

THE HERON POOL.

Such is literally the tale extracted from an ancient M.S., and quaintly repeated to me by our kind host. The love passages, the happiness, the noble feelings and deep unutterable affection of him who, setting aside courtly honours and worldly distinctions for the high prize of woman's love, such

as was Cicely's, combined with all the attributes which could make the home of man most happy, I must leave to those who desire to dwell on them. I have already said that Cicely was a Protestant. She held the true faith which rests alone on the blood of our Redeemer. Love will do much. Love combined with gentleness and the purest mind and affection can do more. Cicely became Lady Badlesmere. Lord Badlesmere renounced the errors of bigotry, intolerance, and confessionals, and knelt in prayer to God by the side of her who was his life, instead of to a wooden image."

The Cross, for such it is termed, or graceful monument, of which a sketch is given, is merely a pillar of much simplicity and interest. It was erected, so says tradition, to commemorate the happy termination of true love, combined with grace of mind—which is to be found even amid the woodlands and the victory of true faith over the bigotry of Romanist superstitions.

CHAPTER XII.

To those who are fond of English scenery combined with many agreeable associations of other days, I would in all kind feeling say, endeavour to visit the spots I have here traced but briefly, and you will find that even among the vales and woodlands of 'Merrie England' there are innumerable localities of interest and delight. For him who wanders solely as a lover of fair prospects, whether they be of mountains, woodlands, or water, amid the sweet repose of our rural home, he will find them in unequalled beauty in the land we live in. If he seek Nature's wildness, it will not be in vain. Add to this the abundant reminiscences of other days scattered o'er the land, speaking of times utterly distinct from our own, and forcibly impressing the

mind reasoning with thoughts of the advances in civilization, and the unbounded blessings conferred on this highly-favoured land, which from the period of the Reformation—the great era from which these rapid strides may be fairly marked by the hand of God—down to the reform in all constitutional acts of late days.

Even as regards the quiet and peaceful spot called Castle Combe, merely a secluded vale, or intersected vales, by a narrow but clear and sparkling river, and bounded by rich woods, much interest may be obtained. The owners of the soil are a family of great antiquity; indeed, there are few throughout the kingdom whose origin can be so directly traced for centuries past. They have fought and bled for their country in the battle-field and done good civil service to the people of England; and I must confess it is most pleasing to think that though birth, fortune and favour have been their lot, those who still hold the name have by no means degenerated in virtue from their ancestors, if liberality of political opinion, carried out by practical acts of kindness, simplicity and courtesy of demeanour, combined with high talents and generous acts of charity, are, as they ought to be, the best criterion of their merits.

In the slight story which, from reminiscences of

the place, and all matters as regards names and places spoken of, and persons who lived and acted on the scene, in which it has been my pleasure to pass many a day, as in regard to the neighbourhood, something may be gleaned of what it was and what it is. Not that in looking on such fair scenes can the imagination ever correctly lead the mind back to those of other days; much must therefore be left to the feelings and fancies of those who behold them. Nothing is more correctly marked on my own mind than this fact; for having I believe, on the whole, seen as much of Scotland, or at least that portion of it for ever immortalised by the transcendent genius of Sir Walter Scott as the 'Great Unknown,' and even wandered to the Western Isles, as also to Orkney and the Shetlands, bearing with me those all-absorbing works speaking of the very spots on which my foot has trod, in all truth I must confess that oftimes when the spirit of his great mind led me on, I sought in vain in fact to bring to the mind's eye those charms engraven by the brightness of his imagination on the heart while following his pages.

Be it so: the pleasure lingers; the disappointment only fades. Should curiosity or fancies such as mine for the scenes of my native land lead those from Foreign shores, or from our own dear

isle, to visit the spot where Shakespeare's spirit still lingers, in memory of him of the buck basket, or to pass through the vales, and still watch the heron rise; or, looking on the monument of love and faith, fancy the sweet face of Cicely gazing on the woodlands from her lattice casement; or, passing an hour by the ancient remnants of that baronial hall, where hilarity and hospitality once dwelt, in the closing evening of the summer time,—the note of the nightingale may banish from his mind recollections of civil wars and feudalism, but will tell him how more dearly to prize the present peace of his native home.

In these days, when the toiler for man's luxuries in the great cities of commerce—blessings be to God!—and man's genius, are permitted to partake, through the power of steam, Heaven's fresh air and peep into the sweet rural scenes hitherto unknown to them, some may follow, perchance, my footsteps to the valley of sweet waters; and in saying this much I own I experience unalloyed pleasure when dwelling on this fact, inasmuch as I hold the happy belief that while amid the working classes many a fine mind, many a noble spirit worn by unrequited toil, has been left to stem the rough stream of life in darkness, enjoying only in fancy the all-absorbing realities of Nature's beauties, they are within their practical realization.

More glorious this thought, if my enthusiasm on such a subject do not carry me too far—that many an unknown genius, clothed in the humblest garb—many a mind, wanting only opportunity to confer benefit on itself as on all mankind—may now hope to escape from the dark and loathsome alley to breathe the fresh air of the mountain top and of the rural vale, where thoughts and inspirations hitherto dead to them will bloom into life for the world's advantage. Never can I regret that during the summer past I was selected as one among the number of those who went forth with eager hope, bidden by the leading men of the day who formed the Royal Commission of Industry of all Nations, to speak to the hearts of my fellow men on the all-inspiring subject of glorious industry and dignity of labour. During this period I visited many cities, many rural towns, many villages then unknown to me; but amid my labours, and they were not light, I had pleasures ever to be remembered. I saw and felt that if the people of this great kingdom were ever ready to rally round the throne and buckle on the sword when the banners of England were raised to call them to meet a Foreign foe, they were not less enthusiastic when the flag of Peace and Industry was unfurled which called on them to compete with other nations on the

peaceful arena of Art and Industry. And what was far more grateful to my heart even than the generous views and desires entertained by many in so noble a cause I must confess was, that of visiting many an humble cottage home, many a hard-working mechanic's dwelling, where not seldom I discovered genius of no common order, conduct the most praiseworthy, art the most elaborate—rarely known beyond the limits of their thresholds, seldom without their limits of native towns. How eagerly have I appealed to such! A field is now open to them—a field far more glorious than that of Waterloo, if they use all the industry of their hands, combined with the genius of their minds, humble though their homes and fortunes; and may God bless their endeavours, be they in the true spirit of Him who directs the gifts He gave them! They will have the chance of visiting the proudest city of the world with the produce of their labours; they will return with full hearts and heads to their rural homes, and work on, though I would feign hope for the future more successfully, amid the blessed repose of Nature's beauties and home simplicities.

One more word as regards Castle Combe, and I wander to scenes perhaps as fair, yet widely varying.

It is to be regretted—though he who so courteously grants the hospitalities of his woodland home may not thank me for the observation—that no comfortable village hostelry is there to be found. Far otherwise. Be the truth told, I have never yet lingered through the village, or watched it embosomed in trees from the neighbouring hills, that I have not desired to witness some well-fashioned, clean and well-provided little sheltering home for tired man and beast, and then built in imagination some ancient house of public entertainment, with gabled ends and a porch, under which the traveller could drink a cup of mild October, fancying it a cup of sack, while watching the sign-board, graced by the portly person of Sir John Fastolf. But such there is not. For the comfort and convenience of the owner of the village perhaps 'tis well, considering how near are the two large cities of Bath and Bristol. Yet am I satisfied that no selfish feeling on his part is the cause; and poor and rich may readily attain a sight of all the village charms, together with the many interesting objects near at hand, even a visit to West Kyngton, where Latimer was once the rector, and where the house in which he lived still stands.

So farewell to these glorious woodlands and sparkling streams, ruins of ancient times, and snug

cottages of our own; and to you, kind host, farewell. Work on in the good cause of charity and professional labour, granted alike to the humble as the rich with courtesy and kindness; and if the world's wealth reward you not, your own conscience will afford balm to the wounded spirit, even in poverty or sadness.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Well, Clifford," I said, as we drove gently up the steep acclivity which led onwards through Ford to the Queen of western cities, "have you ought to regret that for once you have relinquished foreign travel for the enjoyments offered by our own fair land?"

"Far from it. I feel more and more the truth of your assertion, that those who have not really visited England have yet to see Nature in many of her most beautiful, as well as wildest and most magnificent aspects. What woodland scenery, what park-like hills, what perfect pictures of rural beauty have greeted our eyes for the last two days!"

"Glad am I that such are your sentiments, for

we have still many a beauteous scene of all-absorbing interest to visit ere the season come when the comforts of an English fire-side can be appreciated."

Our route this day offered little to interest, till arriving at the top of a hill we beheld below us in a glorious valley the noble city of Bath, and that possibly, as I have since discovered, from the very worst approach to that beautiful locality. I purpose, however, to dwell but briefly on its numerous charms—charms so often dwelt on by the poet, as made known to the world by many an abler pen than mine. However, thousands now visit it who a few years since only pictured it in imagination as a city of hot baths surrounded by precipitous hills, the resort of the invalid and the pleasure-seeker. To me it is one of the most beautiful cities of which England or the world can boast, both as regards natural position as in combination of architecture. For all that—and who can tell the reason? not I—it has no charms to me as a residence, though the advantages there offered to him who desires luxury, or life in the enjoyment of moderation, are abundant. To me it is simply a city of idleness and repose—beauteous and grand to look on. I confess no city more so. What I have to say in reference to its beauties I will therefore say briefly.—

Have you, reader, ever stood on the Alban Hill, and looked o'er the land where—

> "The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
> The Latian coast?"

Have you lingered for an hour on the summit of Montmartre and watched the glittering sun-rays fall in glowing splendour on the golden dome of the Invalides? Have you on a calm and resplendent summer's night sat beneath the trees of the Villa Real Gardens at Naples and marked the glittering moonbeams on the vast and unruffled bay o'er whose surface the shades of Vesuvius are distinctly defined?—or listened to the echoing oars which, casting up showers of fire from the deep blue ocean, are plied by some Neapolitan boatmen in tune to the melodious voices of that southern clime? Yes, there are thousands and tens of thousands of my countrymen who have seen all these magnificent proofs of God's goodness and man's art; and yet how few perchance among the number have ever found themselves, save by duty or chance or what not, on some bright summer's day inhaling the breezes of Heaven from the Royal Crescent at Bath! If so, let them recal to their recollection the sensations created on their minds by so magnificent a scene. They may have witnessed the snow-clad mountains of Switzerland, or

have viewed the frozen plains of Russia, or felt the fevered throbs caused by Eastern suns? The vast rivers and forests of America, the Niagara Falls, to them are no longer novelties. Where the footsteps of living man has left its print, an Englishman there has trod. Scarce a spot throughout the wide world—from scenes of everlasting snow to South Africa's burning deserts, but our native tongue has spoken, or Saxon footsteps have lingered there. But ours—the land we live in—the nearer the beauties, the less the desire to behold them. Stand on the Crescent of Bath: how pleasantly does the eye wander to the south, o'er rich wood-clad hills and scattered villas! Look to the west, the meandering Avon winding its silvery course through luxuriantly-cultivated vales, that no country in the world can surpass! Pleasing, however, as are such scenes as these, I had little desire to remain in cities, our object being to visit woodlands and valleys of sweet waters.

Ere we left the Queen of Western Cities, however, I suggested to my companion that as the night, though starlit and fine, was dark, when the hour of midnight sounded on the Abbey clock we should go forth to the hill of Claverton, whither we had been directed to look over this city of repose. True, the steep ascent was both long

and fatiguing; nevertheless, full well were we repaid. How strange to him who in the hour of darkness stands upon the high land I have named and looks from thence on the fair city! Never shall I forget the enthusiasm of Clifford, who, if not what the world terms a genius, was nevertheless a man of highly-cultivated mind, strong good sense, capable alike of appreciating Nature in all its varied beauties and changes, as he turned to me and repeated the following lines:—

> "How calm is night! how sweet is earth's repose!
> How soothing to the soul is Nature's sleep!
> The world, unconscious of the morrow's cares—
> Forgetful haply of the past—is sunk
> In mental apathy, oblivious rest."

Below us, in a small deep vale, encircled by grand mountains—for such in the hour of night they appeared—slept the vast city, now buried in the silence of night, broken only by the distant sound of some passing wheels, which conveyed the midnight reveller to his feverish couch. The extended crescents and fairy villas which clustered o'er the neighbouring heights; the long streets, and squares, glittering with ten thousand lights, thus throwing their deep shadows on the winding Avon, and distinctively marking its course through the lovely vale. It would indeed be difficult to define that man's sensations who looks at such an hour on

such a scene—his wandering thoughts perchance turning back to other times and fancying the Roman legions who once had gathered on the spot where now (thanks be to God!) such blessings are allowed to the world in advancing civilization.

For my own part, I confess that it cast a saddening feeling on my heart. I felt that I looked on a vast city, built by the hands of man, where all were now apparently hushed in slumber. How quietly the night reigned where but a few hours since all was noise, festivity, commercial enterprise and stirring life. Wealth, poverty, anger, malice, joy and sorrow, were now hushed in slumber—all Nature was at rest. Would that the multitude of that great city could awake in joy instead of sorrow! How many a room in that city, could we have looked within it, would have shown the sufferer on a bed of sorrow or of sickness! Wealth may even at that hour recline on a bed of down in fevered restlessness; while many, who know not when the sun shall rise where to provide the loaf to appease the cry of hunger from lips as dear to them as the offspring of crowned heads, sleep soundly. 'Tis the will of God. Could I have beheld the interior of those houses on which I then looked as mere masses of stone, how would my heart have been rent!—a true picture of what we really

are—not what we ought to be. How many who by the light of day carry their heads high in their own conceit above their fellow men would fall below the humblest of God's creatures! How many who struggle on to gain the means of existence would perhaps still be seen labouring to provide luxurious means of indulgence for those from whom they receive a crust! What slavery of the brain by the midnight lamp to gain the most trivial pittance, or perchance procure others wealth! To see the mother watching over the dying bed of her much-loved first-born idol; to witness the gambler, revelling in his gains or distracted by his losses! In fact, to see man as man really is in privacy, not as before the world! Even this one of Nature's pictures—of no common order—would be almost buried beneath the ruins of the heart's agony.

Yet far better, perchance, that we see it only in fancy than in reality, or we might learn to loath our fellow-men who thus mar the blessings vouchsafed to them; though were we to behold human nature as it really is the lesson of life thus ever before us would probably lead us to divest as far as possible the mind from fancied evils, which when seen through as they generally are under the enthusiastic picture drawn by an excited mind—are even coloured more by an over-wrought imagination than

in truth. For my part, then, clearing away the errors of fancy, let me only recollect that on that dark, yet splendid night, when the heavens glittered with a myriad of stars, whose brightness well-nigh subdued the lights of the silent city, amid which the dark and solemn abbey stood forth in splendid monumental array, built by the feeble hand of man to God's glory, who watched over the sleeping thousands it contained, we lingered till the chill air of returning day warned us it was time to take some rest, ere we moved onwards to seek those pleasures and discharge those duties which called me at least to travel through the beautiful paths of my native land. Thus silently, (for our minds were unusually depressed by the grandeur of the scene which had caused this midnight ramble, which I recommend to all who desire a novel yet most interesting view of this one of Europe's fairest cities, on which we took one more look,) we walked down the steep declivity, passed once more the bridge which spans the river Avon, looked o'er its moving waters, on which the lights still glimmered; then, hastening up the noble street called "Milsom," now free from the tread of busy man, we sought the repose of our Hotel, when sleep—tired Nature's soft restorer—buried in oblivion all exciting memories of the past.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Rise! rise! ye slumberers, rise!
See how she dons her sheen!
Glowing on earth with her beaming eyes,
And sweeping her train through the dusky skies,
Like a brilliant Eastern Queen."

Those who are truly independent are rarely servile, and, as may it be also said among a certain class, equally rarely civil. Yet they neither rob you nor speak untruly—seeking not your favour or fearing your displeasure. Read this as you will, it applies only in its bad sense to the drivers of public carriages, whether cab or fly, which stand in the thoroughfares of the fair city of the West; independent in every sense according to the vulgar acceptation of the term are they—certainly not servile. As to civility, I can say little: not that I de-

sire to condemn the body. Yet I must confess that the only two it was my ill fortune to encounter—whatever interests their employers might have had in seeking my favour—they, good men, cared little for my displeasure. A more extortionate or unthankful couple of independent gentlemen it has rarely been my ill fortune to become acquainted with in these days, when happily even this class, I know not wherefore, belonging to a race whose career is generally speaking rather of the speculative, are beginning to find that a civil word and fair dealing frequently obtains that which no brutality of language ought ever to enforce; and the still greater error of their race is the fact that the weaker sex are all fair game.

As I am writing a simple story of home truths and home travels, I think it well to touch on these trifles,—as public virtues, like public errors, cannot be too well known. The hotel at which we had taken up our quarters, judging liberally, could not have been four hundred yards from the railway station. At the appointed hour of starting, the porter hailed a street cab which stood at hand, in which, with our belongings, consisting of two very small portmanteaus and two hat-boxes, we mounted; and in scarce five minutes—certainly not double that time elapsed ere—we halted before the Great

Western station. Our belongings having been duly cared for, I tendered, in supposition of its abundance, one shilling and sixpence—a shilling in my imagination being a fair charge for labour of horse and man for such a distance, while the extra sixpence was thrown in as a liberal donation, for my heart is ever open to the miseries of a cabman's life, however little I was inclined to pay for the extra weight of the lilliputian portmanteaus and the usual hat-boxes.

"What's this for?" said the driver. (I write the words in plain English, as his were neither of that language nor suitable to ears polite.) "What's this for?"

"Your fare, and sixpence extra."

"Eighteen-pence for driving you," ("and that heavy cove?" I fancy he added, eyeing my friend the Colonel,) "and all this luggage?"

"And more than enough," I replied, "for your incivility. From the top of St. James's-street to Paddington the fare is two shillings—four times the distance you have driven."

"I cares nothing for your James'-streets or Paddington—this is Bath, not London. Here we charges a shilling each fare, and a shilling for luggage; so hand over another 'bob' and a 'tizzy,'" I think he said, implying another shilling and sixpence.

This I stoutly refused, on which he threatened to detain the portmanteaus, which had luckily been sent up to the platform, as the train was momentarily expected; but an additional volley of abuse was launched at my head. On this I called for the aid of one of that, generally speaking, admirable body of men, the police force, who was idling beneath the porticoes. He advanced with a measured tread, looking at the cabman, as had they entered into an arrangement to share all profits extorted from the pockets of the public. I made known my case, on which this defender of the people, scarcely taking his hands from his pockets, calmly replied:

"We don't interfere with the cabs. The charges are up on a board in the hoffice; you had better look at them."

I did look, and had just time to discover that I was perfectly correct in my surmise; and as we turned in haste up the steps towards the train, which had just arrived, the fellow struck off in high delight that he had pocketed an extra sixpence to which he had no right, and tried, though unsuccessfully, to obtain more.

The same high charges are made in regard to omnibuses at Bath, but with no attempt at extortion; for the public calmly submit to pay a shilling for a distance of one half of that which is de-

manded at a neighbouring city. I have named this little incident solely as one of constant occurrence, which the sooner corrected the better, both to the advantage of the public as those who live by them.

But I am recalled to the prudence of not enlarging too greatly in these pages on the manners and customs of the English in the year 1851, as memory brings back forcibly to mind a conversation which I chanced to have with an amiable and courteous publisher, to whom I proposed a work similar to this I am writing.

"Nothing is more agreeable," said he, "than to sit cosily before the fire in one's dressing-gown and follow an enquiring mind through the passing events of every-day life; but to the writer it is not profitable. If you will visit Kamskatcha or Timbuctoo, or take a trip to the North Pole, and jot down daily in your journal something about the weather, something in reference to the manners and customs of the people, and give an account of a dinner or a breakfast, with your style of dress, together with an occasional racy anecdote, and——. Let me have two volumes at least, though three would do better. I have no objection to——what shall I say——a cheque for £100. But English people care not a jot for the beauties of England. However true, however interesting, the book would not sell."

In a commercial point of view, doubtless in a great measure, this is fact. Nevertheless, I was bold enough to differ with him so far that I fully believe that there are thousands and tens of thousands of my fellow-countrymen who would eagerly peruse the most simple tales of their native land in preference to half the novels of fiction that are daily issued from the press. Therefore, although my labours may not reap the reward offered were I induced to write of Foreign lands, of which I have seen more than my share, I shall still cheerfully pursue my journey, holding my own opinion,—setting down nought in malice, though boldly declaring that the waves of the ever-varied ocean break on no fairer land than that over which our Queen Victoria reigns with so much honour to herself and happiness to her subjects. Come with me those who will—something may be gained in knowledge of the land we live in, though that land be not ruled over by a Republic or made loathsome by the sway of despotism.

'Tis now but the matter of an arrow's flight—scarce time, indeed, to read the leading article of a newspaper—between two of the largest cities in the realm,—in former days a pleasant drive of two hours, over one of the finest and broadest roads in England, through varied scenes of rich park land and luxuriant meadow—grateful picture of home

beauty, a valley indeed of sweet waters, through which the meandering Avon winds as a serpent—the scenery broken abruptly here and there by a smiling village, with the little town of Keynsham, marked in history, and its ancient church spire glittering in the sun's rays.

Twelve miles of English land!—enough, nevertheless, to convince the minds of truthful judging men, more particularly so if their footsteps wander from Foreign shores, that peace, liberty and happiness abound on all sides, subject to the law, with due honour to our institutions and the sovereignty of the realm. I may add, for those whose footsteps may perchance ne'er have led them to the West, that there are not throughout Europe two cities so close at hand as those of Bath and Bristol, divided as I have said by four leagues only of one of the richest agricultural vales in England, where so great and marked a disparity prevails both as regards architecture and general appearance. The one, beautiful to behold as to position and buildings, is purely a city of pleasure and aristocratic repose; in fact a city of palaces, surrounded by a garden of Eden, formed by delightful parks and public walks; possessing one of the best and most reasonable markets in the kingdom, throughout which even the most fastidious and high-bred women may walk with-

out fear of soiling her delicate *chausser*, and obtain a *bouquet* of choicest flowers, as the good housewife, wishing to economise her slender means, may obtain the matutinal supplies of butcher's meat, fish, vegetables, or poultry, without fear of inattention or a blush of shame for the apparent meanness of her wants. All this arises solely from the nature of its inhabitants, who may justly be classed as of those of order—people whose means generally speaking are neither great or insufficient to procure the conveniences of life, or who seek pleasure in moderation or health, fine air, as the best warm baths in the world, I imagine, though I have never ventured to have my joints cracked at Constantinople, nor was I skin-brushed at Berne. Pass through the valley of the Avon, brief though the distance, brief the time required—fifteen minutes by express; and the scene is shifted, as from St. Petersburgh to the Alhambra. Nothing in Europe, nothing in England, differs so widely both as to city and people. So recently arrived from a spot of aristocratic ease, clear air and dazzling brightness, behold the curling smoke of countless chimneys; hail the region of industry and labour. Bath, comparatively a resort of splendid ease—"a beautiful city, which charms as ever even eyes familiar with the masterpieces of Bramatt and Palladio, and which the genius of

Anstey and Smollett, of Francis Burney and Jane Austin, have made classic ground;" Bristol, one solely devoted to mercantile pursuits and laborious activity. On entering the latter, everything speaks practically of money-making, speculation and business. Repose the mere pleasure-skiff floating on the great river of Labour. On leaving the former no thoughts rest on the mind save memory of its buildings, its idleness and the beauty with which Nature has surrounded it. Surely 'tis no step from the sublime to the ridiculous, but from the drawing-room to the work-shop. And I confess that in this instance I preferred the latter beyond all comparison, spite of the dark and dismal unwashed face with which it gave me welcome.

Readers, should one of you have had patience to have journeyed with me thus far, lay not my volume down in anger and give me up as unfit for the Russia leather binding which you vouchsafed to me when I spoke of lady's fair eyes and love scenes. I will tell you wherefore. I am not unmindful of the charms of society or aristocratic ease, yet I see no object to be gained by idleness and selfish pleasures. I could not live through the day parading Milsom-street, though in truth the shops are worthy of a sight; or listen to scandal of my neighbours, though I sat in a velvet-

cushioned chair, or dangled my legs from a counter, behind which flashed eyes bright as those of the noble hound who from his earliest days has followed my fortunes, and who now looks lovingly in my face; but where the mind of man and the hand of man is daily employed, either for the benefit of the world at large or to secure the bread of life, much interest is ever to be found, be the sky darkened by dense clouds of smoke or the ear unpleasantly greeted with the unusual noise of the ponderous hammer, or the ceaseless rattle of the shuttle.

But we now passed over a bridge leading to the heart of the ancient city of Bristol, when Clifford, breaking off from an agricultural subject on which we had been conversing, exclaimed:

"Here indeed is life and labour. Look yonder at those countless masts, on which the colours of varied nations float! No better proof exists of the commercial enterprise of this highly-favoured land —nothing more convincing of her internal wealth, as the position she holds with far distant lands."

Agreeing with him entirely on this subject, I may add that Bristol stands also unrivalled in antiquarian lore and interesting reminiscences of other times. The strikingly-beautiful ancient church of Redcliffe, is in itself a picture fit to call the

artist from the land of Italy to behold it; while many and many a long summer's day might lapse in not unrepaid interest, excited by the numberless ancient reliques and houses in which the foot of royalty has lingered or the mind of genius for ever immortalised with its presence. Indeed, not seldom have I contemplated a month's residence in this city, alike so instructive to the historian and the artist, in order to collect the means of offering a simple account of what it is and what it has been to the world. But the knowledge that the voice of the Saxon is alone heard in its marts; the splendid hills which surround it are undecked by the vine or the olive; the river—main road of commercial enterprise, neither the Danube or the Ohio—have induced me rather to enjoy in memory the interest than to force it on those to whom it might offer none. So Bristol, with your dark alleys, turtle-loving merchants, countless carriers, laborious population, for the moment I bid you farewell, with all admiration for those reforms, unpleasing as perchance they may have been to your corporeal body, which have nevertheless been the means of converting your wine-cellars into national schools—proud emblems of your city's wealth; your kitchen range into means of bestowing unaffected charities on the poor; and your gastronomic, self-indulging

ancient Mayors and Aldermen into men who are not entirely insensible to the fact that the goods of this world, for the time being only the property of public bodies, are not intended to be expended on their selfish pleasures, but for the general welfare of those who can claim, like themselves, the right of citizenship. My childish ears were sufficiently greeted with the history of Whittington and his cat—twice Lord Mayor of London; while the Bristolians, if I err not, can boast of a chief magistrate who has sat in the civic chair thrice that number. And if so be that he love the good things of this world, and has the means of bestowing them on his friends, what herald shall proclaim objection, so he finger not the city purse save for the city's welfare! So all joy to his Worship. Let him quaff his cup of sack, and ever as he has done give generously in support of wide-world industry and labour's ill-requited toil.

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SECOND BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

We stood on a grass-grown platform, high even above the houses which form the beautiful suburban town of Clifton. It was there in former ages the banner of the Roman legions floated in the breeze.

"Warriors, and men of taste and discrimination!" observed Clifford; "for never have I yet placed foot on any spot marked by the traces they have left than I witness proofs of Nature's beauty or care for man's physical comfort, fresh springs or flowing rivers, with wide protecting woodlands."

A word, however, before I vainly endeavour to sketch with the pen that spot engraven in all its abundant charms on my mind. I fear my labour to create a just interest will be in vain; yet my hope is to urge those who may perchance read

these pages, and have wandered from Foreign shores, or from other scenes of my native land, to the great capital of England, there to behold the dignity of labour, in this merry month of May, 1851, to pass a summer's day amid these charms. In all truth their eyes will be delighted, as their hearts expanded, in thankfulness to Him who, creating all things, left so bright a landscape on the land.

We stood, as I have already said, on a grass platform, fit carpet formed by Nature's loom for the hard and rocky surface, which is thus made pleasant to the tread of man—a spot scarcely to be surpassed in its own peculiar beauties and rarities. Nature in lavish splendour, even to the line of the horizon on all sides, marks this rare and interesting panorama. As I stood calmly contemplating the vale below me, in thanks to God for the benefits thus conferred on the world, an aged man accosted me, and pointing to the deep and rocky precipice which hung over the Avon, remarked in tones of kind feeling and commiseration:

"Alas! Sir, it was but yesterday that a young lady, scarcely commencing life, fell from the point of yon rock, and, lacerated by the projections on which she struck, was found a mangled corpse in the valley below. This, Sir, is the third calamity

of a similar nature which has occurred within the last two years. The grass is dry and slippery; be careful not to approach too near the edge."

I thanked him for his attention, and, observing his age and respectable demeanour, while I expressed my horror at the incidents he had named, I requested some information as to the locality; the more so, as his conversation gave evident proofs of his understanding."

"I have lived here since my boyhood," he replied, "and well remember the time when not a house stood by yonder trees. This beautiful spot is, however, much altered of late; and I cannot but think that man, in the eager search for Mammon, has done much to desecrate what God had left unrivalled. Buildings have sprung up on every side, where hitherto gardens and waving corn fields, haymakers and flowery dells, alone were seen; and that which once numbered among the most beautiful of English villages has now become a fashionable watering-place."

"However the lover of Nature may deplore that such is the case," I remarked, "it will ever be, in fact. The more beautiful the spot, there will men pitch their abiding-places, without perchance the earth possess elsewhere some mineral lore, or other sources of wealth, holding forth the hand of

plenty to him who seeks for riches. More, the serpent-like river which flows at our feet leads onwards to the great high road of Foreign marts; and the merchant princes, advancing with civilization, doubtless love to dwell amid such fair scenes, and from this noble eminence to watch the flowing sails which, returning from far distant lands, bring to their already overloaded coffers the yearned-for treasures of speculation. Thus, while the ancient city decays, modern art will rear its head; for alike vineyard and pasture must give place to man's various pursuits and changeful taste as to the increase of population."

"It is precisely as you observe, Sir. When I was a boy the wealthy trader or rich merchant was content to live respected in some of the vast and noble houses in yon city which lays below us. They ate their early and simple dinners soon after the sun had crossed the meridian; and then, as a source of unusual pleasure, wandered here with their friends and families on the Sabbath, to pass the afternoon in the enjoyment of this fine air and magnificent scenery, returning with thankful hearts and renewed health to commence the labours of the following week. Now, Sir, all is changed. Watch that long snake of smoke which issues from the train as it hastens onwards through yon luxuriant

vale. When I stood here on this very spot some two score years 'lang syne,' such a sight would have turned my brain. But now, Sir, as the mind of man expands with the times, who shall say in '81 what may arise even from the Industrial Exhibition of '51? So instead of the race of men who lived in yon city possessing, possibly, ships and untold wealth, in liberal hospitality and simple ease—men who by the right of education, as means, had just cause to hold their heads among the highest, —you now find scarce a trader who can boast of a shop-window five yards square but must have his villa at Clifton; and the ancient and spacious mansions of the city are turned into counting-houses, or left as fit abiding-places for their clerks. And thus the evil hour of man's pride and folly often comes with bankruptcy and sorrow and desolation. And so ever will it be; for even experience does not always add to wisdom. Houses will be built for vulgar pride and monied arrogance to inhabit, for the simple reason that misjudging human nature will never learn that mind combined with education and industry can alone raise man to a higher station than that which his birthright affords him. Yet, having them, who dares deny the hand of friendship or of admiration. Without these acquirements wealth

alone is only an all-powerful idol to which men may bend the knee while they despise the possessor. Pardon me that I have thus spoken; and now turn to the scene around you, and tell me, Sir, if you have travelled in Foreign lands, whether we have not reason to be proud of our own?"

"Indeed we have," I replied, at the same time observing, "half the errors which exist, half the enjoyments of life which might be ours are lost, from the fact of there being only two classes of society distinctly defined, so great and so ill understood is the jumble—those who have money and those who have none. Thus it becomes no longer the fashion —most odious word—to glory in those honest and industrious pursuits which have made England prominent above nations and Englishmen everywhere respected. Slow, sure, and honorably, is not the rule of the day; but fast, and how you can;—and this by men who would be utterly astonished were their probity or Christianity doubted."

And now let me turn to look on scenes of all-engrossing loveliness—wood and water, rock and fell, waving corn-fields and luxuriant meadow-lands, sweet-smelling clover and sparkling rivulets. Such were the beauties there painted on Nature's panorama by Him who made the earth.

To the north and west stretched open varied and health-giving downs, backed by rich woodlands, through which peeped many a peaceful villa, the prospect reaching even to the wide-flowing Severn, whose rapid waters divide the shores of England from the beautiful vales and dark mountains of South Wales. Below us some hundred feet the river Avon, in full tide, rolled onwards to mix its course in the Bristol Channel, twisting and turning like the coils of a snake, through a rocky channel o'ershadowed with rich dense woods. To the south the tower of Dundry and its picturesque line of hills stood out some leagues before the eye, marking that portion of rich land closed in by the horizon; while beneath us lay the great city, home of some thousands of souls, toiling for the bread of life. Little, however, save the dense atmosphere of smoke which rolled upwards in the clear sky, was there to tell of living man or life's miseries, still less of the myriad of aching hearts that laboured there. Beyond the gulf again rose the vast hills which mark the back-ground to the fair city we had so recently left. Now turn to the east, another prospect opens to the eye—a country rich in all that makes England great—yeomanry the most loyal, land of the richest, heart of the

truest in loyalty in faith. Mile beyond mile of well-cultivated lands, luxuriant vales, numerous scattered hamlets, church towers and glittering spires, and parks clustered o'er with many a gnarled oak, the growth of centuries.

"Well," said my aged and intelligent companion, after we had lingered for some time in admiration of this splendid prospect, "what say you, gentlemen. Will the eye that has daily watched the Alpine snow recede to the heat of summer; or he who watches the ripening of the grape in southern climes, as do we the strawberry, yet prizing it far less or perchance the far wanderer from China, deign to look on this?"

"Nothing more calculated to prove to an intelligent mind the character of our people," said Clifford. "Not an inch of ground uncultivated; not a beauty vouchsafed by Nature unsecured in its natural advantage, or lost sight of."

"For my part," I added, "I never behold such scenes but for the moment all the bitterness of life's realities vanish—the struggles of poverty, the lot of sorrow and misery, that of millions."

In fact, it would be in vain to look on so glorious a vale as that on which the sun then shone in all its brightness, and watch the flocks and herds in

abundance in such apparent enjoyment, feeding on the green herbage, and not believe it was God's will there should be enough for all, but that man, ever plotting ever scheming against his fellow man, having grasped the larger portion for himself, cares not who falls next. The moment I look on the city all these thoughts vanish, as mere idle fancies. Life's reality stands forth harsh and defined. The smoke no longer curls forth as from the rural cottage, clear and blue, but rolls upwards dense and dark—dark as the selfish heart of man. But I must no longer dwell on scenes like these, though a volume might be written solely to point out the charms which Nature on all sides has so lavishly bestowed on this much-favoured neighbourhood, on which I have so lightly touched. So, having thanked and bid farewell to him who, having passed a long life there, still with unsubdued interest lingered o'er its charms, I must, as Mr. Gordon Cumming recently has taught us—"Inspan," and start once more, though not in pursuit of the elephants which roam in the vast forests of Southern Africa, but to the golden vales of the land we live in, amid countless beauties hoping to watch the onward march of industry and add my humble voice in admiration of the many blessings it creates.

Yet a word to those who have stood, as was my happiness, on that noble platform—Nature's own monument of grace and beauty, which the hand of art may labour in vain to imitate. Some, enthusiastic on such subjects as am I, will go with me in the truthfulness—if they be not satisfied with the weakness—of my delineation; while others, perchance, looking as did I on a bright day of summer time on that fair picture, may compare it with other lands as unlike, and, taken in a whole, bearing no comparison, yet giving them the balance in favour. If I have been the humble means, however, of suggesting a summer day's excursion to a few of my own countrymen who are reasonable enough not to fancy they know England as many do, solely because they were born and live there, I fear not but they will thank me for thus roughly sketching out a route which they will do well to follow, filling up the points I have travelled over according to their own fancies.

But I have another hope at heart—a hope that my ardent admiration for English scenery induces an anxious wish to the utmost should be realised. I would desire some of the vast legion who will doubtless gather round the banners of industry and peace, unfurled as they in are the park of England's capi-

tal, when the leaves of summer hang thick on the woodlands, should not solely confine themselves to the pleasures offered in the great city, but wander amid scenes whither my footsteps led me, deigning to witness the peace—I would pray, in a great majority, the plenty—which dwells in our rural homes; passing through inland towns, surrounded by well-cultivated pastures, where the tread of soldiers is no longer heard, and quiet industry and peaceful labour go hand in hand, in honour to the Sovereign and due submission to the law; and yet where freedom alone in the true spirit reigns throughout the world. They may visit also fair scenes marked in the history of our country by the recollection of civil strife—for here in this peaceful land, as elsewhere, the horrors of that unchristian war-cry has been heard; yet while beyond the white cliffs of Albion thrones have been overthrown and sovereigns displaced, the true spirit of England has ever gained the day. When the battle has raged strongest, which loyalty and freedom—a loyalty which even the Commonwealth, and Commonwealth it truly was which placed such a man as Cromwell in power, and I go far in the belief that the glory of England rose from that era—yet even then the feeling of loyalty, the love for monarchical institu-

tions so closely engraven on the hearts of all Englishmen, even wisely denied a crown to the head of him whose blood ne'er flowed from the veins of kings though (and I can say it without fear of being committed to the Tower) the Lord High Protector would have made a somewhat better Sovereign than some few among the number who have since reigned over this fair land.

CHAPTER II.

On the eighteenth of June, 1685, precisely one hundred and sixty-six years previous to the glorious battle of Waterloo, Monmouth entered the beautiful county town of Taunton. Ere the day dawned on the morning of the sixth of July occurred the last battle that has been ever fought on English ground—on the plains of Sedgmoor, where the royal army defeated the men of Somersetshire—an epoch in the history of our country in itself sufficient to make all connected with that district interesting to him who seeks not solely beauties of Nature, but reminiscences of days when civil and religious controversy drew the sword from the scabbard. Alas! that the fair west should even be now disquieted by religious contention, whose war-

fare is carried on by the keen weapon of the law, which wounds at times more grievously than the sword.

When the early railway mania burst into a flame, consuming thousands in the ruins of speculation, the aim of the Great Western Directory was to reach the city of Bristol. Subsequent enterprise has joined that city in contiguous route with Exeter. As a direct line from that city to the metropolis, it needs only a slight reference to the most imperfect map of England to show that no such intention ever entered the heads of those speculating geniuses who have done us the immeasurable kindness of opening out this land, teeming with beauty and historical reminiscences. I know not how far as a marketable scheme it may have answered; and I fear me that while few may have been the gainers, many have been the losers. And we may still perchance live to see the day when, straight as the flight of the arrow—a common Saxon expression—the rushing steam-engine may wend its way through other lands in its more direct course to the city of Episcopalian disquietude. In the meantime, though I may stand alone in such opinion, I am satisfied and thankful, and moreover have experienced the enjoyment of passing westward in this most agreeable fashion of modern

locomotion, thus in a few short hours introducing the traveller to scenes but a few years back existing only in the imagination of the multitude,—in these, within the reach of the aged and those of moderate fortune.

Of Weston-super-Mare, one of the principal stations on the line, I have little to say, save to express my astonishment, not that the citizens of Bristol should resort there in preference to their own fair neighbourhood, but that those—aye, and by hundreds—having time and means should make it a summer residence in preference to another hour of railway travelling which would secure to them the fresh air and delightful breeze of the blue and ever varied ocean.

But pass we on to Bridgwater, the steeple of whose parish church still rears its lofty head, as if seeking to approach the clouds. Let him who lingers there follow the footsteps of Monmouth, whose gallant spirit and whose effeminate weakness, contrasting with the bloody-minded Duke, dwell on and cling to the imagination at every point of view over which the eye of interest roams from mile to mile in that locality, marked by the blood-stained traces of civil war; and then on to the golden vales of Taunton, for golden truly is it, in the richest luxuriance of abundant Nature, watered by flowing

rivers and crystal streams—truly a valley of sweet waters. But thus says the most talented and most charming historian of modern ages—whether he be a perfectly correct one I will not pretend to say; enough that I for one am perfectly satisfied to read and believe; and thus reading and believing, I have gained more knowledge even from the two volumes with which he has hitherto favoured us than I ever did under the fear of the supple twigs cut from the silvery birch tree for boyhood's persecution. "When Monmouth marched into Taunton," he says, "it was an eminently prosperous place. Its markets were plentifully supplied. It was the celebrated seat of two woollen manufactures. The people boasted that they lived in a land flowing with milk and honey; nor was this language held only by partial natives, for every stranger who climbed the graceful tower of St. Mary Magdalene owned that he saw beneath him the most fertile of English valleys. It was a country rich with orchards and green pastures, among which were scattered in gay abundance manor houses, cottages, and villages." Doubtless nothing can be more true than what is here written. Though I love thee, sweet vale—true garden of beauty! which Nature has doubly increased in the lapse of a century and a half—yet I must confess

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the inhabitants of this much-favoured town, who first proclaimed Monmouth as their king, appear to have scarcely advanced with the times.

Of the neighbourhood thus also speaks Dr. Amory—a native, who enjoyed its balmy breezes about a century past:

> "Round thee in spring we view with ravished eyes
> Italian scenes on English ground arise;
> Which, crowned with freedom, rival Paradise.
> The enamell'd meads with vast profusion show
> The various colours of the heavenly bow;
> The fatt'ning Tone in slow meander moves,
> Loath to forsake the happy land it loves."

But let me in all good nature speak of it as I found it. Think of it I ever must as one of the finest scenes of my native land, and, peopling it with other times, one of the most interesting.

"What say you Clifford; shall we walk to the charming home of her I have so often described to you—the gentle friend of my youthful days? or shall we command a coach and watch the population from the window?"

"Call a coach by all means, if you will it, Linton, for our belongings. But, air and exercise for ever!"

So we walked through this favoured inland town, of which more anon, and traversing the ancient market-place, reached—not a valley of sweet waters—but a charming eminence, from which we obtained

a view of the town, with the two handsome and lofty towers of St. Mary Magdalene and St. James rearing their graceful heads and glittering in the sunbeams.

Here on this luxuriant spot stood the peaceful home of her who bid us a warm welcome and tendered affectionate hospitality. There are, I trust, but few who will treat with contempt the idea that the grown man should clasp with delight and enthusiasm emanating from the heart's affection the hand of her whose white hair, carefully arranged beneath the well-suited cap, and watch with grateful love the eyes o'erflowing with tears that called back the memory of the past, while with tender care for his comfort and eager gladness for his coming she welcomed him who stood before her. Yet are there others, thanks be to God! who in this simple picture of affection will recur to their own days of youth and happiness, and join with me in blessing those who formed their early minds and loved to watch their footsteps through the rough paths which lead across the battle-field of life.

Moving from my firm friend of long years, I hastened to make known my friend Clifford, and in the like manner introduced him to the dear lady's niece, who was to her a child in all but the will of Nature, and with a grace that ne'er could be

surpassed loved by her in return with a tender assiduity that nothing but the heart's true affection could call forth—nothing but the heart's devoted reality could realise; the veriest hypocrite could never imitate care such as hers—it was indeed grateful to human nature to behold.

I have said it is pleasant to remember that though my footsteps led me to fair scenes, those scenes will ever be dearer to my recollection that I sought to create a spirit of industry, as fairly to lay before, more particularly the humbler classes, the great value of energy and labour. It was not alone among the poor and working classes, however, that my efforts on all occasions led me. And now that I write on a subject so gloriously realized, and recollect the varied interests that came before me, I fancy I see the animated face of one lady who, issuing from an assembly it had been my pleasing duty to address on the happy and noble subject of universal industry and peace, claimed to be made known to me. Having thanked her for many kind expressions which she uttered in reference to the interest she had received from the subject I had but feebly dwelt on, I named the pleasure it would afford me to repeat any of the explanations I had given.

"By no means, Sir," she replied. "My object

was solely to thank you for the kind and generous manner in which you alluded to a class to which I belong, and in which I have now two daughters earning their bread—they are governesses. For all that, my husband was an officer who distinguished himself in the Peninsular war—gained the rank of a field officer, and died on the battle-field. With justice, and by education, they can claim the rank of ladies—with ladies, thank God, are they living; by them are they respected, nay loved, as by their children, to whom not only their education is entrusted, but also the formation of their young minds in these the earliest days of their youth. In fact education, most erroniously so termed, is sought like all else, in the cheapest market. Can mind and disposition be purchased there? I fear not.

Now it so chanced that I had with more than usual earnestness dwelt on the cares and unrequited labours of the instructress, urged thereto by the knowledge that amid my audience sat more than one of those who laboured for the bread of life in the education of youth—moreover, ladies gifted with accomplishments far beyond the common order, which accomplishments had already gained for them more than one prize from the Society of Arts, and who were desirous to enter the lists with renewed

ardour, in the hope of gaining still more honour in the battle of industry.

Alas! the title of governess—one of honour—in the days we live in is most cruelly disparaged—most thoroughly misunderstood. Need we do more than read the daily papers to prove this fact? Advertisement follows advertisement, setting forth that a so-termed educated lady is prepared to teach all the accomplishments under the sun for the wages of a housemaid, while side by side appears another requiring unheard-of services for half the sum. I confess it makes one's heart bleed to read them, on the one hand, while on the other it beats with indignity at the insolence and impertinence of those who can desire to debase the dignity of mind and education by such demands on the labour of the brain. And yet one is gratefully relieved when the fact stands out in all its practical reality. But the jumble of the present state of society has, like other things, converted the governess of other days into the moderately-instructed nursery governess of the present; and thus while on the one hand a lady of the highest mental attainments who, even if not born in the same position as those whose minds she has formed, by her amiable qualities, as instructed by her abilities, becomes loved and respected by the children whose early years she had

watched over, and equally so by their parents,—ladies who received an income for those services equal to that of many who now advertise for governesses are placed on the same footing with with those greatly to be pitied young women who, having learnt a little, are obliged to submit to every sort of indignity from those who, ignorant themselves, are satisfied that their children should endeavour to gain some knowledge at the least possible outlay, and yet never hesitate to treat those to whom they have entrusted the formation of the minds of these children with indignity and frequently with less generosity than their servants, utterly forgetful that they thus cast insult and humiliation on those far better instructed than themselves, and thereby injure those of their own life's blood.

But how can it be otherwise when a governess is called on to make ladies of those who had far better seek some honest course of life and independence, for the simple reason that instead of sending children to the best of schools it is more dignified to say 'We keep a governess,'—better to add honestly, 'because it is far more economical, for she teaches the children and acts as lady's maid to my wife.' But I have dwelt on this subject I know not why, save that I feel the name in its true spirit

is totally misunderstood and misapplied—the more so when I think of her whose home we had now entered, and towards whom my heart ever clings with gratitude and affection. Gifted with all graces of mind and heart, and of late years happily with those of moderate fortune, she had selected her retirement amid the beauties of Nature, where many, high in the world's estimation as in rank, are welcomed as her children.

But I must linger yet awhile amid this bower of roses, a description of which may not be unpleasing or unworthy of a visit to those who may perchance to wander to that county where reminiscences of civil war and stirring events of history are found in profusion, amid scenery of no common beauty and singular interest.

Where now may be seen a simple but beautiful thatched cottage—a very pearl in the wilderness—of lady-like repose, there once stood a large farm-house, whereat on his retreat from the battle of Sedgmoor the Duke of Monmouth, accompanied by Lord Grey, is said to have endeavoured to conceal himself. It lies under Polden Hill, about two or three miles from the battle-field, and it was there, so says history, that both of them were hospitably entertained. There are other stories, not uninteresting, connected with the period, the men and

the locality to which in a fit place I shall allude; while others name it as about a mile south-west of Taunton, where there is a knoll which commands a fine view of the vale. This hill is called "Mount Nebo," in allusion to that mount from which Moses, as is mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, was allowed to take a view of the promised land—a land of milk and honey.

Be it as it may, we now enter a simple dwelling, yet so perfect in its keeping and adornment, and so well fitted to those who, surrounded by graceful elegance, added to it tenfold by the frank amiability and generous kindness in which they tendered their hospitality! The small drawing-room in which they sat was truly a picture of brightness and comfort, that I have rarely, if ever, seen surpassed—perfectly in unison with a portion of the old building from which it had been converted into a somewhat low and oblong form of inconsiderable size; the French windows—a modern innovation—opening on to a flower garden, where Flora reigned with abundant charms of blended colours and sweet-smelling and beautiful flowers. I stood at this window on the evening of my arrival, by the side of the young lady, the adopted child of my hostess, whom I had known from childhood, and looked on the lovely prospect which she thus

described. I shall give her own words; they will read far better, as coming from such fair lips, than ought my pen could indite. The evening was warm and clear, one of summer's kindest offering. The tinkling sheep-bell was heard from afar; the low of herds sounded up the vale. So still was all Nature that even the multitudes in the town which lay some two miles or less below seemed to reach our ears.

"Well, Henny," (her name was Henrietta,) said I, "you have pitched your tent on a fair and fruitful spot, and with the best of friends. You are happy, —most happy, thank God. Few can say that. And she is well, and ever kind, and loves you and the repose of this sweet spot?"

"She is well, and more than kind, and enjoys the repose of this sweet spot; but whether she loves me, that is another question," she added, looking up with bright and laughing eyes. "But I hope she does. Well, if she does not, I do."

"So you tell me, Henny."

"Those graceful towers are St. Mary Magdalene and St. James's; and yon hills are the Quantock Hills; and in the distance you can mark the church spire of Bridgwater; and yonder in the vale is the village of Weston, where Feversham lay somewhat too composedly the night previous to the

battle of Sedgmoor. Indeed you can trace with a glass the winding of the Bristol Channel, as of Monmouth's line of march. Alas! his unhappy fate! And we are sheltered by the woods of Masham and the Blagdon Hills; and yonder stands a monument to the greatest warrior of modern ages—the renowned Duke; and——."

"But stop; I find you are enthusiastic, like many others of your sex. Why so, fair lady, as regards Monmouth."

"He was handsome, gallant and brave, as unfortunate."

"What more, say you?"

"He was true to the Protestant faith; and though he drew his sword in error and rebellion against a king, that king was unworthy to rule over England, as was his heart wanting in mercy even to the son of a brother he professed to love."

"Why really, Henny, you are a little republican. I shall expect to hear of your raising an army of stout yeomen from your beautiful vale once more to march on Bristol. But what say you of this Prince's truth in love—a subject more befitting your thoughts on such a night as this?"

"I say he erred in weakness, but not in truth. He loved well and fondly the only woman who ever touched his heart in reality; and had he not been

urged on by others, he never would have met his cruel fate. But I speak only of his truth in love, not of its errors. As for his noble nature, the very house in which we now live bears proof—if history be no fiction—of his kindness of heart. Indeed, mine bleeds when I look o'er yonder prospect and fancy the hundreds of our brave yeomen who fell from treachery or by the chance of accident—for ill led they were not. But doubtless the will of God so directed it for some wise purpose; and it was here possibly where we now stand that he who had fought for and lost a crown, flying from remorseless enemies, unmindful of his own mental agonies, which must have been great, had still a tear of sorrow to bestow on the miseries of his labourer. Having fled from the lost field of Sedgmoor, he sought shelter in the home of a humble follower, one who had tilled the ground in peace, and knelt to God in the true faith; but when the country rose to arms, to crush and dethrone a cruel and unkingly tyrant, he put aside the plough-share and buckled on the sword to fight against despotism and oppression. The battle over, notwithstanding the danger, he returned to his home—a home made dear to him that it held a young wife and his only child, who lay on a bed of sickness. There the Duke took shelter, there urged him to fly; but no!

the heart of a parent clung to his child, dearer to him than life. The child died, while the father, being torn from his home, was murdered by the tyrant orders of Jeffreys. The Duke, forgot for the moment his own sufferings in the presence of this humble yet sorrowing man, and he who but yesterday had fought for a throne—now knelt by the dying infant's bed and prayed that God would vouchsafe to restore him to health or take him to a happier world. Then rising, and placing some portion of the small means he had at his command in the mother's hand, he expressed gratitude to those who had sheltered him, and hastened on the road which led to a scaffold. I have retained some lines, which appear to me so expressive on this matter of history, that you shall hear them."

And with a gentle, yet clear voice, made more impressive by the stillness of the night, she thus repeated them:—

"'Tis vain, 'tis vain,
Oh ask me not to leave
My dying child!
I must remain,
To see the spoiler weave
His web of darkness o'er
Those eyes so mild,
No more, no more,
To gladden this fond heart
With their effulgent brightness.

Dim they are,
Each like a clouded star;
And deadly whiteness
Overspreadeth now,
That clammy brow
And cheek once blooming as the rose.
* * * *
My boy! my boy!
My life! my hope! my joy!
No words can paint
The anguish of my breast;
And yet they deem
That I could sleep, could rest,
Apart from thee!
No, no, it cannot be!
Dear child, thy last look must be turned on me!"

"Beautiful!" I exclaimed; "a thousand thanks. I go with you, dear Henny, in all your enthusiasm as regards the men who fought alike for their freedom as their religion; doubly so in my abhorrence and detestation of the tyranny of those times, whether emanating from kings or councillors, which still lingers in the hearts and memories of those who are daily accustomed to look on the theatre where they were acted."

"As will freedom of civil and religious liberty," she replied, "henceforth be ever dear to England—my country and my home. But the sun has already vanished behind those hills, and the moon will soon shine brightly over the vale. Come pets," she said, addressing two beautiful terriers, "it is time that

I should offer our friends some tea. And so ——," addressing me by my christian name, doubtless considering me an indulgent grandpapa, whom she had known long years—"you must wait till to-morrow; then I will mount my favourite pony, Monmouth, and we will have a scamper over the country, when I will introduce you to many spots of interest with which this neighbourhood abounds."

CHAPTER III.

Perhaps there is nothing in human nature more beautiful than the true, heartfelt, and simple affection evinced by the young towards the aged; doubly so when that affection is returned by one whose heart is overflowing with tenderness and grateful fondness. As I followed this one of Nature's most charming daughters, and watched her hang over the chair of her she termed mother, who kissing her on the brow expressed words of gentle kindness, and then with grace attended to the feminine duties of the tea table, I own I envied both. Even Clifford, who sat in a comfortable arm-chair which commanded a view of the garden, appeared touched by the genuinely simple yet

natural gracefulness of all around him, and addressing me with some warmth he declared that the spots I had selected as our halting-places, though utterly dissimilar, were chosen with the utmost attention to his pleasure.

"But yesterday, Madam," he added, addressing our hostess, "buried amid the woodlands we received unaffected hospitality and were charmed with the scenery around us. To-day we come to a fairy-land, with fairies to entertain us living in bowers of roses fit for Eastern princesses—with mile on mile of delicious woodlands and vales for our pleasure-ground."

And he spoke truly. The room in which we sat was perfect of its kind—the most fastidious, the eye of the most refined, could have discovered nothing to find fault with. Not an article of furniture denoted pretension, far less vulgarity or ostentation. All was simple elegance and ease. A pale green paper covered the sides of the room, around which ran a broad gold moulding; above the small white marble chimney-piece a handsome pier glass, with antique gilded framing, rose nearly to the ceiling, which was low. All the furniture was of satin wood, the sofa and arm-chairs being covered with a small simple chintz, of a light green flowery pattern, to match the paper. At the one end, a double

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sliding panel, now thrown wide, discovered a beautiful small conservatory, in perfect keeping with the drawing-room, filled with the most blooming and sweet-scented but not expensive flowers, on which the moon now shone in refulgent brightness. Truly was it a fairy scene—fitting residence for its inmates. Another small room opened from the further end, which was termed a morning-room or boudoir; this was filled with books, save above the fire-place were hung several good pictures of those loved in life and whose remembrance was valued in death—not all, however, of man and woman and children, but of those dumb animals which, as is generally the case with all kind hearts, they loved to have in companionship on all occasions. A small dining-room in addition formed the whole ground-floor of this charming little abode, save the offices, which were in proportion to the remainder of the house; the bed-rooms, few in number, being all equally elegant, and abounding in comforts so welcome to those who, not demanding the extravagancies, yet love the conveniences of civilized life.

Sweet is the recollection of that evening, passed in cheerful conversation and friendly intercourse in that charming house; and when at length, finding we had already trespassed by two hours on their

usual hour of retiring, we bid them 'good night,' I confess that, throwing open my window and looking down that vast golden vale now hushed in night's quietness, I thought, though in the very house where scenes of unquestionable interest had been acted, far more of those who were then its inmates than of those who had taken part in civil strife.

CHAPTER IV.

The saddest heart in England would have felt some allevation of its sorrow could its owner have looked forth on that golden vale, as was my lot on the following brilliant morning of summer time. Rising early I threw awide my window and inhaled the fresh air, whose breezes filled the room with the delicious perfumes of the jasmine, rose and honeysuckle, which clustered o'er the cottage. Dressing, I descended; and having made friends with the two rough terriers hastened to the lawn, alike the better to inspect the beautiful scene, as the residence wherein I had been welcomed. Truly was it a spot in which a lover of Nature, books and peace, might desire to dwell. Though it be sin to covet the goods of others, I committed that sin,

both as regards the house and its fine garden; and, to speak the truth, I would willingly have taken the owners into the bargain. It was a delightful picture, this sylvan cottage, in the calm and balmy coolness of a dewy morning; and to behold the rose-trees and creepers, as the warmth of the morning sun opened the closed flowers, that appeared thus to awake after rest of the night, and the fresh-blown rose-buds that were hardly to be seen the evening before. Truly was it a little fairy home, the exterior of which was wanting in none of those embellishments that are required to invest a cottage with those charms which the hand of Nature alone can fully set forth. Notwithstanding, however, the beauty of all this, the variety of sweet-smelling flowers, the magnificence of the scenery on which I looked, the stillness and quietness that reigned around, broken solely by the song of the blackbird and thrush, which in spite of the havoc they committed in the fruit garden were never allowed to be disturbed,—notwithstanding the gambols of the two little bright-eyed fellows who chased one another around the borders, there was a certain vacancy that required filling up. If my animal senses were gratified, the mind felt somehow dissatisfied; and instead of allowing my whole heart to turn towards Heaven with deep gratitude for the blessings

granted to me, I yearned for the companionship of the sweet girl who had so pleased me by her graceful intelligence the night previous. Such is human nature—never satisfied. In this case my wishes were not long unrealized. From one of the French windows she now stepped, fresh and bright as the morning; and being most warmly welcomed by her pets, she turned and greeted me with much kindness.

"What think you of our hermitage?"

"As charming as yourself."

"And the prospect?"

"As unlike you as possible—wanting your wildness of character, yet most luxuriant in Nature's beauties. And yet on such a morning as this the expanse of vale within the range of the eye is so vast that it subdues the imagination, which you could never do."

"Ever as you were!" she replied. (Even now as in my childhood ready to get up a little quarrelsome opposition, for the sake of making peace, which often tends to bind us in firmer friendship.) "But I know you well; you delight in all such scenery as this. So, breakfast being over, we will start at once, and riding to the top of yon hill I will show you a panorama such as Europe cannot surpass;

and then to spots alike gloriously bedecked by Nature and interesting from by-gone events!"

Those who delight in that most agreeable of meals, a breakfast, if so be the hearts of the company are cheerful, are welcome to a seat at the most simple yet charming repast it was ever my good fortune to partake of. In the little boudoir I have already spoken of—or I will rather call it a snug little morning book-room—on a round table was laid the whitest of damask cloths, in the centre of which stood a glass of varied-coloured moss roses, that filled the apartment with perfume. Home-made bread, with strawberries and Devonshire cream, new eggs, and prawns fresh the day previous from the rocky coast of Beer, offered a repast befitting those who gave it, as those who enjoyed it.

At this pleasant meal it was decided we were to halt for the time at their agreeable quarters,—the more so, as my duties called me among the inhabitants of the neighbouring town; and Clifford, nothing loath to linger amid such fair scenes and, as he remarked, in such sylvan quarters, decided on remaining with our kind hostess while we rode forth over hill and far away on that fair summer's morning.

Half an hour after breakfast my youthful and

intelligent companion and escort mounted her favourite little grey Arabian 'Monmouth,' dressed in the most simple yet admirably-fitting dark blue riding-habit, while her small and graceful head was covered with a black, well-made 'wide-awake' and flowing plume; indeed I would give you a sketch of my companion did I not fear to cause a degree of envy in the hearts of those who probably would have had no objection to have ridden by her side. Having been reminded to be careful of my charge by our kind hostess, we slowly rode up the beautiful heights which surround the golden vale of Taunton.

As we did so I pressed her for information in reference to that town which the murderer Jeffreys had stained with blood, and wandering back to the era of his tyrant master, James, thanked God with my whole spirit aloud and so fervently at the blessed peace which reigned in our fair land that my companion, fully entering into my sentiments, added her own meed of thankfulness, asserting "that if the spirit of religious controversy as regards trifles, little understood in many cases by those most angry in dispute and most bigotted in opinion, could but merge into that which sought only true Christianity and brotherhood, there would be little

wanting to make ours the most blessed of nations in happiness."

"You ask me, however, of the town below?" she added, as we sat on horseback on these beautiful hills. "I will tell you all I know, for we seldom visit it, save we require some of those trifles you will say that women always do want. In fact, we have an occasional day of shopping—and the *Gazette* tells us all else, and more than we desire to know."

"Precisely. You visit the Berlin wool-shop, and the drapers, and the dress-makers, and fifty other shops, bringing home an abundance of unnecessary commodities which you fancy you require, but really do not want—often to make things still more useless. Well, it keeps you out of mischief, and so far the habit is desirable. Nevertheless, I take leave to add that I am your devoted cavalier on all occasions save on shopping days."

"In some sense of the word you speak truly; but our shopping is not precisely such as you would believe. However, the markets are as plentifully supplied as of old, but unfortunately the supply vanishes with the rapidity of the times to the great marts of London, Bristol and Bath. So, wanting a turkey fattened in the golden vale, you must be up with the lark to secure the best, or put

up with such as may be deemed good enough for rustics who live a hundred and sixty miles from the great Babylon, and who were doubtless once considered as unknown savages, who fattened on Somerset bacon and drank nothing but cider. Notwithstanding railways and speculation, however, (thanks be to God!) what is left for us is good enough and cheap enough for those who desire to live comfortably themselves and wish others to live at all. So far as regards poultry or meat on market days, that is both abundant and good; but by some law —why or wherefore instituted I know not, which requires, nevertheless, immediate reform—there is a monopoly permitted among the knights of the cleaver, two being only allowed to follow the trade within the town. Therefore, failing to obtain such as you desire on market days, alternative you have none but to request a joint from one or the other, being entirely at their mercy; and as he of the upper part of the town is independent and somewhat opinionated as to his neighbours' requirements, should you perchance to solicit a sirloin of beef, having none, he sends you a joint of mutton of such weight that probably, having limited appetites and liking not mutton, you are displeased or disgusted; but keep it you must or get nothing. Whereas the other, being courteous and civil, should he send

a shoulder when you require a leg, not wishing to hurt the good man's feelings you are obliged to roast it and order onion sauce, which is a most excellent addition, but not sweet smelling."

And thus the laughing girl went on speaking in all mirth of men and things, and yet causing me much amusement and much information—

"Notwithstanding this monopoly of butchers' meat, the town increases in size, as its population in number. But I regret to add there is a repose—I must, without intended discourtesy, term it a lethargic repose—among the inhabitants, as if the effect of abundance, fair scenery and mild climate acted on the population, as in olden times the riches of Mexico did on the fiery Spaniards. They live in the land of milk and honey, and being content with their lot scarcely aspire to anything more. Consequently the reposing population increase, but the industrious mechanic and labouring population decrease. And yet that fair town, now by man's genius brought within four hours of the greatest commercial city in the world—watered by a pleasant river, permitting a considerable navigation within a few leagues of the Bristol Channel, sheltered by splendid hills, on which the rigours of winter are rarely felt with severity, or the snow known to linger—situated in a golden vale,—in fact like Palermo, in

Val di Conchiglia d'Oro, on which the summer heat never strikes too oppressively,—like the land of the south, producing vegetation of the most abundant kind and flowers the most beautiful and luxuriant—makes apparently but few strides in the great race of improvement and industry. Ask why. The answer would be 'the supply is equal to the demand,'—that is, for the body. So, be it wanting something for the mind 'you must order it from London.' Thus stands a town placed by the hand of man in one of Nature's fairest gardens, which, like a plant in parched ground you forget to tend and water; so it withers and lingers and dies, and is cast away."

"Truly, young lady," I added, as we now approached the little town of Ilminster, "you speak boldly of the place, as of the people. In good faith were you but a man you would have little chance of election as a bailiff or an alderman."

"And I would covet neither the one or the other. But were I so I would stir up the spirit of the men of the west to fight the battle of industry and prove the dignity of labour. More, there should be some honour in the old saying—'Where should I be born else but in Taunton Dean;' for such was their phrase in other days, as were it a disparagement to be born in any other place and none in

England, nay, in the world, were to be compared with it. Still, I am told there are some active spirits in this fair town of the west—among them the much-respected E—— W——, a man who, though suffering from dreadful physical affliction and for twenty years reduced to crutches, has yet a mind and spirit carrying all obstacles before it, and ably advocating the spirit of advance among his fellow townsmen."

But we now approached the park of Dillington, my fair companion having selected this beautiful ride to point out to me a splendid Spanish chesnut tree, measuring at three feet from the ground upwards twenty-six feet in circumference. The old branches have principally been removed by the ravages of time, but there are others attached to it which produce large timber, as well as a quantity of fruit annually. As we drew the rein beneath this noble tree, of which I give an imperfect sketch, she gracefully took her plumed hat from her head and bowed in memory of him who merited a better fate; then pointing at this immense tree, she added:

"It is not only remarkable for its bulk, but also for having afforded shade to the Duke of Monmouth, who took refreshment under it during his progress through the west."

Having lingered here an hour we diversified our

MONMOUTH'S TREE.

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route, returning by agreeable lanes, well-wooded and well-cultivated farm lands, to join those whom we had left during our absence to visit charms nearer home.

My duties called me the following day to more active if not more interesting scenes in the town, an account of which I must defer; yet if I shall in this simple account be the means of inducing any one to follow my footsteps I fear not but they will thank me for having thus roughly marked their line of march.

CHAPTER V.

Previous to quitting the pleasant neighbourhood of Taunton I would desire to say a few words in reference to its local administration.

In days past, like most other of our inland towns, it was presided over by, or rather boasted of, a chief magistrate, be aring the honourable title of "his Worship the Mayor." The last of these civic functionaries, as history tells us, however, having died a natural death in days 'lang syne,' in those we live in his important duties miserably, yet so far wisely curtailed, are entrusted to two (doubtless illustrious) individuals glorying in the title of High Bailiffs. Whether their functions are in proportion to the appellation 'High,' or simply in reference to the Bailiff, I will leave for their fellow-townsmen

to explain; and far be it from me to criticize the wisdom of the selection, on whomsoever it may chance to fall; yet it does appear to me, as doubtless it must to many more practically informed as to the wants and advantages of this quiet town, strange that those who sit in the pride of high place, if not in the possession of high power, should be chosen without reference to mental acquirements or aught termed qualification, as leaders in all tending to benefit their fellow-men or the town, in which 'corporealty' they unquestionably, during the period to which I allude, took a 'large,' if not a prominent station.

The loss of this heretofore chief magistrate (at least so we read) emanated from very simple causes —causes which unhappily do not as yet appear to be eradicated, and at which many may be disposed to smile, even knowing them to be facts—solely that when an election was about to take place to fill the magisterial seat, vacated by death or the expiration of official servitude, the Tauntonians, never early risers or prominently active in life's labour, save as regards trifles—to them all-prominent features in the world's advance—perchanced to take an extra nap on that fair morning; and thus, as things then were and unfortunately not seldom now are, the hour of election passed without even the limited

number of burgesses being present to elect; and thus this highly-favoured town—the capital of the vale of milk and honey—lost for ever their potentate, and thenceforth have submitted to the rule of bailiffs.

I am well aware, for I have felt when sojourning there, that the enervating effects of the climate of that charming garden of Somerset rather inclines both mind and body to indolence and ease than energy and activity; and although an early riser, I have not seldom, like the worthy freemen aforesaid, found myself induced to turn and turn again —to ruminate and refresh the body with an extra snooze, or a nap or a dose, or whatever men may term the indulgence, till long after the sun has glittered on the waters of the Tone and its surrounding luxurious and smiling meads, through which

> "The river nobly foams and flows—
> The charm of this enchanted ground—
> And all its thousand turns disclose
> Some fresher beauty, varying sound."

And when I have quitted this one of Nature's most cheerful landscapes, and endeavoured to satisfy my mind as to the cause of the unwonted depression and prostration that affected me, I have ever come to the conclusion that it was the unusual mildness of the air, even in mid-winter time. So be it. And

this I am willing to believe is also the cause of the utter stagnation, as also the utter want of enterprise, which apparently reigns in the minds as evinced in the actions of the inhabitants.

As for the Bailiffs, poor men! what may be their important duties, I know now not; or whether they be ungarnished standing dishes, or mere well-nurtured gentlemen, condemned by the public voice to save the majority some little trouble for a season in positions to which they were neither born or for which they have capacity—at least if I may judge from their functionaries, and I speak of them as mere public flesh and blood, bedecked in public attire, for of their private individuality I know nothing, who gave me the honour of their support, such as it was, certainly not of their money, as regards the subject of the wide-world Exhibition of Industry; in the glory of which some, indeed many, of their fellow-townsmen have so laudably and with so much genius and industry generously contributed. I should say they were far better fitted to be beef-eaters than Bailiffs or aught else where mind is called into action, heart touched, or courtesy and loyalty required; and I must own it did then, as ever will it, appear to me a question worthy of consideration to those active-minded residents in this pleasant abiding-place who hold property, as to whether it

would not be desirable to be up and stirring with the times, and once more endeavour to place the town of Taunton on the same footing as that of their neighbours, than to dream away life amid smiling pastures and pleasant climate, permitting the energy of the past to be neglected and forgotten in the present want of it.

This has not been written with intended discourtesy, but with a desire to create a new era in life's progress in scenes to which God has been so bountiful. Indeed, I never recur to this seat of historical lore and luxuriant groves than my heart reverts in grateful and pleasurable recollection to one whom from father to son can justly call it home, and who while he honoured me with his friendship enabled me to pass many a pleasant hour in rational conversation, as in agreeable and mental association. Without hesitation I refer to the name of E—— W——, a name familiar to all the county round, and justly respected where zeal in the service of his neighbour, charity without ostentation, and generosity, combined with no common mind, are welcomed among men. In all places and on all occasions where his energy and sound sense is required for the benefit of others, he is ever foremost, notwithstanding acute sufferings, patiently endured for years, emanating from the dire

physical affliction of two broken thighs, thus left with all the energy of middle life a cripple and on crutches. Need I say more to prove the fact of his elastic mind than to add that on these he visited the treasures of the capital of Republican France, and when there, brief as the time allotted to him, saw more that is worthy of inspection and gathered more valuable information from that he witnessed in two brief weeks than do nine-tenths of those who yearly loiter in the Palais Royal, or idle away a life in unprofitable pastime amid the perfumed orangeries of the Tuillieres, or the fashionable refinement of the Champs Elysee. To such a man as this I applied for knowledge of Taunton and its people; and all that he told me he told truly and frankly, yet ever with abundant good feeling, and an earnest desire for the welfare of his fellow townsmen. For all that he was not unmindful of what was required, in rejoicing in that vouchsafed to them; and I fancy, was he elected as chief magistrate and the order restored, more energy would henceforth be ensured and the motto "Aucto splendore resurgam" might henceforth be exchanged for "Requiescat in pace," which I conceive they now merit.

On my applying to one of the worthy Bailiffs for an explanation as to the cause of Taunton's

boasting of no Mayor, he thus in his wisdom courteously replied:

"We have first-rate local magistrates: had we a Mayor, their services might be lost. They now acquit themselves as regards the local administration satisfactorily, and we require no more."

So be it. If the Tauntonians are satisfied, why should the rest of the world interfere, even though the *Times* of this day, April 5th, sends forth an advertisement to those desirous of flying from the heat and turmoil of the metropolis, to hasten there, where they will find cheap houses, freshening gales, first-rate gastronomy, and a thousand charms.

The Worshipful the Bailiff is a high-sounding title, and for aught I know to the contrary quite as aristocratic as a Worshipful Mayor. Sir Michael Jarvi, Bailiff, or Sir John Jones, Bailiff, would sound very well; and as these are the days for the desecration of knightood, who can say but that some of these worthy men may not win their spurs; it mattereth little apparently whether they be made of gold or pewter. True, there was, however, a time when this ancient and then glorious distinction of knighthood was gained solely in the battle-field or on the main, for some high deed of chivalry, to be recorded in England's history. But now, forsooth, it is bestowed on tinkers

tailors, attorneys-at-law, and candlestick-makers—not for mending pots and pans better than their neighbours, or for making well-fitting 'breeks,' or for drawing honest briefs, or for inventing pattern candle-snuffers,—all in their several ways deserving of eulogium,—but for what, who can tell save those who recommend their sovereign to put a fool's cap often on an honest and popular man's head—to turn him henceforth into ridicule, if not contempt, when deserving something better? That which high genius used for its country's welfare, that which gallant deeds in war or high acts in peace was once so greatly coveted, is now actually a cause of ridicule. Honour be to such a man as Stephenson, that he refused the dignity, though deservedly honoured by his gracious sovereign! A G.C.B. or a K.C.B. are titles none can dispute; they confer the highest honour on those who receive them—well-earned distinctions conferred on those who have contributed to the glory of England; and if high talent and genius in art or industry are, as they ought to be, rewarded, wide must the merit granted be between such men and those who present an address or have served as a civic functionary, which in other days consisted in the eating of turtle and the drinking of punch. If England is desirous

thus gracefully to bestow her honours where merit is due, better to found a new order of knighthood. Now it is most difficult to define the 'My Lady' of him who has led armies to victory, men of the highest scientific attainments or of the highest art, from the 'My Lady' of but yesterday, a tailor or a pork-butcher. Not for one moment that origin has aught to do with the matter, if the man himself has fairly gained it. So adieu to the bailiffs, hereafter for aught I know to be Sir John'd or Sir Thomas'd; but not yet farewell to Taunton.

The world's heart, as the world's mind, has recently been fevered by a letter emanating from the pen of the Prime Minister of England to one of our most distinguished prelates, on the subject of the Pope's mad bull, which has arrived from Rome with sharpened horns, prepared to toss all the good Protestants of the United Kingdom. For my part I cannot help thinking that had Mr. *Punch* set his dog Toby at him, and opened his umbrella in his face, but that he would have bolted, direct on his return to the Vatican. However, it is scarce a subject to joke about; and I with some millions of my countrymen confess that the word 'impertinence,' used with all its force, precisely explains the Pope's conduct. What but impertinence that a

petty Prince, permitted by the aid of French bayonets to rule with the despotism of Catholic bigotry over an insignificant and fallen State, should presume to thrust his presumptuous priest-craft on such a nation as Protestant England? Again, the reading of Lord John's letter almost inclines one to laugh, not, however, I beg to observe, at the Minister or the letter, but at the very severe and smart box inflicted on the Popish Prince's ears. In truth they must tingle even now. What then? Having drawn the sword from the scabbard (or placed the pen into the ink-bottle), like a man fighting in the dark against a host of hidden enemies, it is only to be hoped that he will thrust home like a gallant warrior, and, having marked one man, be enabled to secure him. True, the wound may be only a flesh one, but the skirmish has commenced. The advanced picquets have been gallantly driven in, and have fallen back on the main body of the Roman Catholic army. It is time therefore to throw away the scabbard; for though Lord John Russell has for the moment beaten back the advance of the foe, thus inspiring his forces gathered round him from east and west, north and south—and he has done so vigorously and honestly, yet possibly unadvisedly—or at least

I may presume to say hastily,—without, if I may use the vulgar term, he must 'go the whole hog' —that is, nail his colours to the mast, if he would swim and not sink in the storm. And why so? That he will have brought on his flanks a force of political guerillas, who caring not one iota for Pope, Cardinal, or Bishop, will harass and assault him solely for plunder or for power. There are, however, a host of staunch and true-hearted Christians and Protestants, who will stand by him to the last—men of high honour, high intellect, and above all true faith in mercy through the sufferings of their Redeemer, who are loyal to their sovereign and true friends to their country,—utterly opposed to the Pope and his elected prelates, yet nevertheless real advocates of civil and religious liberty under the law, and its right spirit. And while they honour the writer of the letter to the Bishop of Durham as a minister and a man, yet will they only support him that he abides by the whole tenor of it, acting however as far as may be against a form of religion all true Protestants abhor, and not against its followers—clinging to the Cross of Christ as the only hope of salvation—and legislating religiously and not politically on such a subject; putting down with a firm heart,

not the men, but their mummeries and absurdities, more particularly as regards the Tractarians, as wolves in sheep's clothing—even more detestable than Romanism; and thus feeling assured, that aught done in God's honour, God will acknowledge and uphold. If we are true Protestants, we can commit no act of wrong in endeavouring utterly to annihilate, as far as this country is concerned, the deep-laid, Jesuitical efforts of those who think little of the means, if the end be gained. Persecute not, however, those who kneel in darkness and even to wooden images, and worship forms and ceremonies—really absolute matters of derision—instead of kneeling to their God in the name of their Redeemer, as effectually on the lonely heath as in the most costly cathedral that ere man's hands in most elaborate design or architectural genius erected. But urge the Legislature, aided by the law, if so called on, to put down with a firm hand all attempts to intrude on the pure spirit of our simple faith; and while nine-tenths of the people of this great nation will support the minister who thus acts, he cannot err either towards his Maker or deteriorate one jot from the spirit of religious toleration he has ever so honestly and manfully sustained, by thus preventing the dire

evils which we have just grounds to fear, should he deviate from the firm and upright course which he has selected as knowing it to be right.

I will now, while speaking of my visit to the fair town of Taunton, name two establishments in its immediate neighbourhood which may create some interest, more particularly at the present period, in the minds of my readers, as regards the question above alluded to. The one, denominated the 'Lodge,' is a Roman Catholic nunnery;* the other—smile if you will, and with reason, at its absurd title, if it be not nick-named—the 'Agapemone,' or the Abode of Love.

As regards convents—Catholic prisons—in this Protestant country, I desire to say as little as possible with severity, in courtesy to the sex of those self-immolated prisoners: nor do I desire to wound the feelings of any one, or to defame; and in truth,

* "The convent commonly called Taunton Lodge is a branch of the order of the first Francis, which took its rise early in the 13th century. This English branch of the institute settled in Belgium 230 years ago; and as it was entirely composed of British Catholic ladies, who did not know the language of the country sufficiently to take charge of an hospital, they confined themselves to the education of English young ladies. By the French revolution, these ladies were forced to quit Belgium in 1794. They resided at Winchester till 1807, when they settled at Taunton, where they continue to educate a select number of young ladies, according to their own idea of education."

save as regards the outward walls, I know nothing, either of the regulations of the convent itself or of the physiognomy of the Lady Abbess, or of any of the lady nuns her young charges, and still less of the illustrious inspector and counsellor, a gentleman who calls himself the Bishop of Clifton, though it is a very pretty spot for a Bishop's Palace, and I confess I should feel myself "strong enough" for the place, if well salaried; and as to the occasional jaunts to Taunton by express to visit this convent, they must be vastly agreeable. And yet I must declare, when I have looked on the exterior of this said Lodge it has appeared to me to be a vastly pleasant abiding-place either for young gentlemen or for young ladies. And what is a strange fact, but not the less a true one, I have ever remarked that the priests of the Roman faith selected to perform high mass and confess fair maidens in merrie Protestant England should be nine times out of ten vastly agreeable companions, and peculiarly well-favoured men. In Foreign lands, more particularly as regards Spain, where Romanism exists in all the glitter of gold and formality—I will take for instance the cathedral at Burgos, where there is sufficient gold-leaf and paint to satisfy half-a-dozen Italian operas—the priesthood are rarely comely,

clean or attractive, save in their sallow emaciation or personal rotundity. But here, forsooth, where the church bells send forth their soothing and melodious notes each Sabbath, o'er luxuriant meads and smiling peaceful vales, to call together a congregation to gather in a simple edifice for shelter, there to offer up prayers to God's glory with simplicity and faith, these gentlemen walk abroad in polished boots, with silk umbrellas under their arms, as were they sent here to lead the fashion, instead of flocks astray. As regards Lady Abbesses, their nuns and their nunneries, I consider them as public characters and as public institutions, and as such, and such alone, do I allude to them.

Is it not then pitiful to think that while schools and factories and all other similar institutions are submitted to public inspection by the authority of Parliament, that no law should permit the same ordeal as regards Convents; still more so as regards Abodes of Love—the former, to say the least of them, resorts of bigotry and intolerance, scarce permitted in Catholic and Republican France, and yet abounding in the land we live in? At Taunton high walls and high trees exclude the public from a sight of the Convent, while vigilance and carefully locked doors keep the inmates from the enjoyment

of the bright world which God has graciously bestowed in His all-merciful wisdom. At Clifton it is even worse than at Taunton; and I really believe, should a stranger by chance find himself within the prescribed barricade he would be hunted from the premises like a mad dog. If there is nothing wrong, if there is nothing unseemly within the walls of a convent, why are all the world excluded? If I am not in error, till the inmates have taken the veil they have not quitted it, according to their sense. Let the doors, then, be opened awide, and let the multitude behold what christian offices are therein performed, what charity, what pure humiliation, what love and happiness. Then will a convent be judged on its right merits, and more leniently than at present; still more so if an occasional inspection of proceedings by an official somewhat better in selection than that permitted from Rome,—a handsome, middle-aged, not over-scrupulous priest.

But convents with all their objections, for aught I know to the contrary, may be abodes of innocent purity and happiness. But alas! what can man reasonably believe of an institution—indeed I am at a loss to name it, so I must call it as it is termed, "The Abode of Love"—a family of love, living

together cheek by jowl in a Paradise of trees and flowers, in one of those chosen spots of England's richest counties—feasting, not fasting, and enjoying themselves to the top of their bent, even a jollification and a game of 'hockey' being permitted on the Sabbath morning, while our congregations are kneeling in prayer; and for aught I know to the contrary—as all is in common—using each other's tooth-brushes; riding on fine horses, lounging in first-rate carriages, and faring sumptuously every day—"jolly companions every one," as I am creditably informed; men and maids, wives and widows, to the number of three-score and more, with joint purses and washhand-stands; the chins of the men closely shaven, the ladies' locks all shorn—here again the equality I conceive.

And all this as far as it goes may possibly be treated with derision and contempt—looked on as a sort of merry party, feasting and frolicking in this their Agapemone. But when we hear that the head and chief of this 'abode of love,' in the vale of milk and honey, is by some of them looked on and worshipped as their God; when we hear of their having their chapel turned into a banquetting-room, and denouncing the Sabbath,—I for one am bold enough to say that it is a disgrace

to England in this the enlightened 19th century that such things are, or that the Legislature should allow such places to remain—the worst of gambling-houses, and mummeries, and all else. This "abode of love" ought to be utterly uprooted, if alone to save the credit of our church, many of whose Tractarian ministers appear to have been its chief founders. Oh! it is indeed degradation to think of this 'Abode of Love.'

[NOTE].—The above chapter was written and sent to press previous to the meeting of Parliament; so it is printed as it was written.

CHAPTER VI.

The fatigues consequent on this agreeable day caused refreshing sleep, though not undisturbed by dreams and created fancies, engendered on the mind by waking thoughts. Those, however, were probably not such as may interest the reader who seeks romance. So be it; shut the book. To those, however, who can find some pleasure and some information even from the most simple narrative, read on. I saw not before me while dreaming of the fair form of her whose gentle kindness had afforded me that merry morning hours of delightful recreation and knowledge of the country as it now is, while peopling it as it was in days of bloodshed and civil war,—I saw not the full eye and open nostril of her favourite Arabian, as I had done while he bounded as if conscious of his precious burthen

with spirit and elasticity over the turf,—nor the floating plume or the beauteous landscape. My mind wandered to the city and the multitude, and the duties of the following day, which were those of fighting the battle of industry and endeavouring to create an emulation among my fellow labourers, that each might endeavour to prove by his own acts and deeds the dignity of labour and obtain its precious results. I fancied the inauguration, as it has not been unaptly termed, of the Exhibition of all Nations had at length arrived. The sun in all its glory shone o'er the vast capital of England —the proudest commercial city of the world; the banners of peace and brotherhood, industry and art, were floating in the summer's breeze, planted on English ground, around which were gathered countless multitudes.

Again the great city, which for the first time shelters the stranger from all parts of the known world, was hushed in the silence of night. But day dawns again on stirring life, and the festival is ushered in by the loud rich tones of all the chimes in London, while the vast throng, among whom I numbered, hasten onwards eager to behold the most stupendous realization of human industry ever recorded in the history of the world. I dream again: the vast pile, the splendid glass edifice

devised by man's genius and erected by man's hands appeared as illuminated with myriads of varied coloured lamps, diamonds and jewellery. The richest articles of art and industry surround me on all sides. I look from one of the long galleries on the mass below. My brain whirls, as are my eyes dazzled, by the varied and unequalled splendour of the scene. There walks the noble from the East, robed in the richest garments; near to him, dividing his attention between dead art and living man, stands the rustic in velveteen and the soberly-attired mechanic. The fez of the Turk towers above the plumed bonnet of our fair Englishwomen. Albanian and Greek, Hungarian and Chinese, mingle in the vast crowd with the European. Every imaginable costume is there; every nation on earth is there represented by labour and by life. My head falls giddy with the scene; my heart even in sleep sickens with the idea—why, who can say, for strange thoughts enter the mind disturbed in sleep. I fancy that the building gives way at this moment. I hear an awful crash, as the fall of the thunder-bolt. A thousand cannons seem to roar. Crash! crash! the glittering glass flies asunder—the mighty iron pillars yield. A moment! and ten thousand human souls are hurried to destruction. Another roar of thunder! In my agony I awake.

A cold perspiration hangs on my brow. I start, with eye-balls extended—spring from my bed—and awake to thank God it is all a dream.

Day-light truly is at hand, but a thunder-storm, such as in midsummer time often occurs in England, is passing o'er the beauteous vale—yesterday so calm. Flashes of lightning again and again cross through the room. The thunder burst forth as I have never heard thunder in England before. The lovely flowers were laid low, the walks like running rivulets. The whole cottage appeared shaken. But it passed, growling like a lion, o'er the neighbouring hills, and the sun shone forth again, leaving all Nature as my heretofore troubled heart—once more in repose.

I prepared to meet the inhabitants of that town who will I trust yield their share of industry to the approaching festival, of whose inauguration I had thus so painfully thought in my disturbed sleep.

Breakfast being over, I hastened to the town where years 'lang syne' Monmouth was proclaimed a sovereign, and acts of bloodshed and violence were perpetrated which after the lapse of more than a century have scarcely ceased to be the conversation of its inhabitants. Even now in these days of peace and comparative plenty it is scarcely pos-

sible to tread its public square or market-place without recurring to rebellious times, while the narrow street called "Tangier" still more powerfully recals the mind to such wretches as Jeffreys and Kirke again, although a modern historian, with a noble spirit pervading every page of his most glorious work, if not entirely contradicting, yet removes in a great measure, the vilest acts of the latter. Yet the visitor who lingers where my footsteps led led me can scarcely look on the windows of the White Hart hostelry, still open to the public, without shuddering at the thought of past events, made still more singularly abhorrent inasmuch as during the past year it was the roof-tree of a murderer and murderess whose crimes can scarce be paralleled in the annals of human atrocity.

Yet, leaving such painful thoughts I must now turn to others more pleasing to all who value the onward course of human industry and labour, and who seek that art and science, combined with the dignity of labour and virtue's peaceful ways, should go hand in hand in securing the honour and happiness of our Protestant English homes. Many a humble roof I entered where genius laboured in simple attire, but with eager hope. Many an hour I passed by the side of the working mechanic, and the ofttimes ill-requited artisan; and healthy was

the lesson I learnt in my ardent desire to instil into their minds—hope, energy, and perseverance, to fight the great battle of industry with the contending wide-world army they were preparing to meet in England's capital; and when I beheld these men of varied positions and acquirements gathered together with other classes in life, both male and female, although opinions were varied, as always will they be, backed not seldom by selfishness and political partisanship,—it will ever be a source of pleasing, heartfelt recollection should I have induced one wavering spirit, however humble his lot, to labour onwards in good earnest, upright will, to serve himself, and thus equally serve mankind.

Few are aware—I honestly confess my previous ignorance of the varied acquirements—few will even believe, till they practically witness as did I, to whom we are indebted for half the luxuries, half the artistic skill, and all the manual labour which makes others rich—not seldom at their own expense; and so far, if no farther, I confess the noble scheme of the Exhibition of Industry of 1851 will, under God, tend to place labour on a proper footing—industry and genius on its surest foundation. Heretofore we have been enabled to

say 'this gorgeous silk! that graceful and various-tinted shawl!'—the one from Howell and James's, the other from Everington's—not always the products of Foreign marts—are laid before the eyes of a thousand admirers. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of that thousand go their way commenting and expatiating on their beauties, and praising their elegance and exquisite workmanship, and highly commending those whose wealth or capital has enabled them to offer such articles of refined luxury to the public gaze, as to admire them on the persons of those who have the means to possess them. Not a thought, however, not a care, is vouchsafed to the artisan who has laboured to produce such treasures; nor is one word of grateful praise bestowed on the designer or the workman. No; from the shops I have named or any others of sufficient note, they are said to have come. What more is required? Not a single syllable is uttered of where obtained, by whom produced. Suffice, there they are, to be purchased for money and worn for the admiring world; and so is it from the beginning to the end of the chapter. The very shirts we wear, the coats, the boots, the hats, the very bread of life by which we are sustained,—one and all are too frequently the products of hard-working, ill-

requited, unremitting, struggling labour. Yet not a jot of gratitude is produced in our hearts that they have toiled and slaved while we perchance have slept calmly on a bed of down or enjoyed the frivolous pleasures of life. We look on and wonder —remunerate the master-tailor or master-baker, and there ends the sum total of our thoughts. I would venture to hope, however, in this Great Exhibition of Industry of all Nations the poor artisan may have the benefit of his head or handiwork. If genius be found among the working class, however humble the possessor, he should reap the well-merited reward of his labours; and I would fain hope and believe that among the exhibitors there will be found many whose productions known through this medium as their own, will take their station far higher among men than has hitherto been the case. At all events labour, agricultural as well as mechanical, will be more fairly and more justly remunerated, while genius and art are acknowledged and rewarded.

To those who look forward to visit this Great Exhibition of Industry simply as a splendid bazaar, which during the spring and summer time, cheered with bright suns and long days, they will hasten in parties of pleasure to behold, I may probably be

enabled to offer but little either of instruction or amusement. To those, however, who have the interest of their more humble and yet ofttimes not less intelligent brotherhood at heart,—still more so to those who laboured with me in this noble cause of industry,—who saw with practical eyes, and heard the numerous wild objections that not seldom were uttered against it, more particularly in the agricultural districts,—it may not be unpleasing that in these pages I brighten my onward path through the valleys of the beautiful West with memories and anecdotes connected with these duties, though some are not unfamiliar; and to the enlightened foreigner who visits old England, and dwells as he will do with pride on the arts and produce of his native land—perhaps in some instances gaining the prize among so many and such numerous contenders—who may desire to know something of our rural districts, I am emboldened even to tell the simplest tale.

To be truthful, then, I am free to confess that amid all my little oppositions those most difficult to disperse were not only the least grounded on upright and generous motives of reasonable judgment, but on silly motives of obstinate and untenable reasoning, which, to do them justice, I cannot imagine

the opposers credited. The first of these objections was purely political; and thus, although the leader of one political party as the leader of the other, combined with men of the highest attainments, highest worldly positions and highest honour, with the Prince Consort as their President, were appointed by Her Majesty to promote this great undertaking—men who laboured together without thought of injury to the one class for the benefit of the other, but with the noble idea of uniting the labour of the world on one common battle-field of accumulative industry and christian brotherhood, —the whole scheme, by a very considerable and influential portion of the nation, was utterly denounced as a vast inauguration or feast of Free-Trade, for the annihilation of protection to native industry; as if the 'protection' they desire at least was not dead and buried in all reasoning minds long ere the Exhibition was born. Spite of such feelings as regards this strong party, the enthusiasm of the majority increased like the Crystal Palace—emanating from the genius of Paxton—which daily rose like the tower of Babylon towards the skies. I say towards the skies, because the efforts of man, if honestly directed for the benefit of mankind, are acceptable to God, and for my part I shall hail

the day that the humble mechanic who now works at the loom; the oftimes ill-paid, suffering struggler of the garret, labouring, yet scarcely living; the artist, galled by want and penury and humiliated by unrealized ambition; the humblest as the highest genius gifted by God with powers of mind, may still hope that one ray of the sunshine of prosperity may fall on the gloomy aspect of his life, and that henceforth, inspired by emulation, he may be permitted to contend with the world at large, and take that station which intellect, in whatever form made useful to the world, ought to give him among his fellow men. Nay more: if he possess mechanical invention or other powers of art, display that art before the world as his own—claim it as his own—and receive that just reward from a grateful nation for his labours which hitherto have been hid from the light of day, or caused only power and wealth and honour to accrue to those who may have found the means to pay—alas! how niggardly—for the work of hands and heads who by honest industry have used high gifts to enrich ignorance and ease.

But there was another strong tower of opposition built up by the objectors, which, however, was not difficult to upset; yet strange to say in many in-

stances the fair sex stood longest in the breach. "What," said one of these by no means unenlightened spinsters, whose sentiments were echoed by another and another, "Are you about to inundate the country with foreign goods?" Now this was really an admirable joke, as advanced by those who doubtless never intentionally wear an English shoe or an English glove, or aught else I wot of English save an impracticable bustle, which no Parisian artiste would have owned and which is now happily becoming day by day an unnatural personal deformity, more and more scarce among civilised society. But the assertion that this wide-world Exhibition was intended, or is intended, as a means of introducing foreign industry to the exclusion of our own is alike ungenerous in idea as untrue in fact. And were such the case, what then, to the high-minded and truly industrious? So far from feeling afflicted or humiliated, it should rather be a cause of rejoicing, as enabling us to show an incontestible pre-eminence, at least as regards the useful, over the rest of the world. To asperse one's neighbour is to lower one's self. The rivalries between nations are paltry and shameful when they consist in denying or in hating the good that is done by our neighbours. These rivalries, on the contrary,

are noble and fruitful when they consist in acknowledging, in glorying, and in imitating the good which is done everywhere. Instead of jealousies, these rivalries then become emulations. What does it signify whether a thing be English or French, provided it be a benefit? Virtues are of every country. It is God who inspires them, and humanity which develops them. Let us banish then all such feelings from our minds, not fearing that some industrious foreigner should carry away a well-deserved prize for a work of elegance or usefulness, but rather glory in the feeling that, having invited him to our land, he should have taught us something which yet we knew not, and for which we should rather return our thanks than feel contempt and jealousy.

I confess, with no intended discourtesy, that it appears to me somewhat absurd, somewhat ungenerous, that those who would discard a glove made by English labour—would feel their pretty feet dishonoured were they cased in shoes not purchased and paid for at a large price, as supposed to have passed the waters which divide *perfide Albion* from the land of Republican *gloire*—as that those who would scarce believe that their heads are protected from the weather, or fit to appear in what is termed

fashionable society, without they possess a Parisian hat, or pull on a boot made by a Parisian bootmaker, should bring forward such grounds of objection to that which in countless numbers they will rush to behold, sparing no expense for self gratification and self comfort, though they refused a groat to build a palace of industry or a kind word for its success, and returning thence delighted and amazed—delighted at the spectacle, and amazed at their ignorance that all the vaunted treasures for which they have so readily paid as believing them to come from foreign lands should have been made by the laborious hands of their own countrymen—the produce of our own dear England!

CHAPTER VII.

"Every man, no matter how lowly he may appear to himself, might still endeavour to produce something for the benefit or use of society, remembering that an insect furnishes by its labour materials wherewith to form the regal robes of kings."

What a touching picture might be drawn of a rustic home embellished by the kindly bonds of family union, united to the manifold comforts resulting from peaceful industry, combined with the blessings of sobriety and the earthly happiness of him who, renouncing the society of the beer-shop or the ale-house, passes his time when released from the labours of the day in aiding those of his hearth by example and encouragement to fight the battle of life!—in doing something, however trifling, to aid their early years in an honest endeavour practically to gain some knowledge of their duties to man—ever acceptable to and encouraged by God! It

was my lot, not seldom—a lot most pleasant to recollection—to witness the interior of some such homes amid the rural vales of old England; and it will be still my greater happiness to know that many who thus act have, now the flag of industry is raised, gained some well-merited reward.

But a word to those who fear that our native industry is to be crushed by foreign importations of "gew-gaws" and jewellery and frivolities of luxury—for such was the language used with reference to the Industrial Exhibition. Yet who will purchase, if purchased they are, such articles? Why, solely the rich, who purchase them now, and who would purchase, if to be had, whether offered for sale under the splendid glass palace of Paxton's genius or in the shops of foreign *artistes*, or manufactories, wherever produced. The million, as do they now, will look to the useful, the lasting and the limited in price, with far more scrutiny than will they at splendour of workmanship, or in admiration of artistical beauty and taste; while the few, dwelling on the charms of art and genius, will demand alike the name of the inventor and producer.

In the beautiful inland town to which at the moment I more particularly allude, it was my good fortune to enter the abode of more than one indus-

trious artisan, possessed alike of qualities of mind, upright conduct, and persevering energy, which I doubt not will lead them to a higher place among men, as in public estimation, than they have hitherto ever dreamt of, after the inauguration of this great feast of industry and peaceful competition, which offers so wide a field alike for mechanical genius and mental invention. Not happily that merit has on all occasions been unrewarded or unknown, be that merit solely the work of men's hands. Yet am I satisfied there are very many cases in which a life-long toil of honest industry and labour has gone unrequited and unacknowledged to the grave, while chance, or what is vulgarly termed "luck," or speculation, or aught else, has risen with a hop, step and a jump, to the top of the ladder of fortune—from the world's too ready eulogy of fortune, and too ready humiliation of misfortune.

It may not appear gracious to herald the names and works of those about to enter on this great arena to fight the battle with the world of industry; nor perhaps ought I, nor will I, dwell too minutely on the expected productions of those who have so courteously permitted me an entry into their inventive laboratories, and to the world at large as yet secret inspirations of their craft. Yet why not?

My object is to do them justice and to acknowledge their kindness, by letting the world know whose the mind that creates, whose the hand that labours; and with all honour to him I may say that without the capital of "merrie" England there is no superior upholsterer than Mr. Steevens—a native of that town which even the memory of the Bloody Assize may cause many a foreign footstep to visit.

Those who witness Mr. Steevens's splendid cabinet, combining as it does in every sense of the word elaborate inventive genius with unrivalled workmanship and illustrative art, will have sufficient proof that even the artists of our inland towns—aye, even amid our lovely rural districts—are men who can vie with the world at large.

I urge therefore on those who perchance may journey westward—whether they be my fellow-countrymen or those from foreign lands—to halt an hour or two at this pleasant abiding-place, be it only to cast a limited glance on a graceful display of taste and industry—the mind and the hand working in unison. I will vouch for this fact, that be he whom he may, if not urged by mere idle curiosity, who desires to witness this depôt of admirable workmanship, he will meet with all courtesy and attention from its owner. In the west he is well known; and if I judge not incorrectly, before

the leaves of another summer wane perchance his production may be judged fitting a place in the halls of our Sovereign, as will he be known to the world. Yet should a work of elegance, most elaborately and skilfully carried out, be not sufficient to arrest your progress, follow,—and he will lead the way to his store of varied English woods—the production of, and collected from, the forests and woodlands and parks of this highly-favoured island, and yet of such beauty and variety in grain, knot and colour, as may well astonish those who heretofore have imagined that mahogany is the only produce fit for a dining-table or a side-board, and that satin-wood alone is sufficiently graceful to set before the fastidious eyes of those who enter the drawing-room.

But it is not alone of an establishment such as this that I desire to speak at any length. It requires no trumpeter or advertisement. The industry of genius is there sufficient to pave the way to uninterrupted success and admiration.

Indeed it would be difficult, if not in vain, to describe the chaste and truly magnificent piece of furniture which Mr. Steevens, in conjunction with his brother and Mr. Perry, (whom I shall hereafter have occasion to mention,) are preparing for the Exhibition. I will therefore only name to those

who may not have the pleasure of seeing it, as for those more particularly of the west who may desire to form a slight estimate of its varied beauties, that it forms an elaborate and exquisitely-carved Cabinet of English walnut, more particularly as representing the bounties supplied to man by the will of God during the four seasons, so charmingly described by the poet Thomson:—

"Come, gentle Spring; ethereal mildness, come!
And from the bosom of yon drooping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

From brightening fields of ether, fair disclosed,
Child of the sun, refulgent Summer comes
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depths.

Crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on, the Doric reed
Once more well pleased and true.

See Winter comes to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train—
Vapours, and clouds, and storms."

In truth is it a right royal piece of workmanship, fit for the Prince promoter of the Exhibition.

He also who so cleverly carved in box the cradle offered for her Majesty's children claims Taunton as his native town; and though others, perchance, may not seldom have gained the honour I fear which his industry and talented art ought to have

vouchsafed to him,* he works on, notwithstanding ill-health and moderate means, with redoubled industry and enthusiasm, now that a fair field is offered for genius in this wide-world arena of emulation. I have stood beside him and watched the rapid and well-defined lines marked by his chisel, guided by taste and talent over the pencil lines of the designer, which, though rough in their idea and illustration, he turned into works of beauty and elaborate carving which Gibbon would not be ashamed to own—indeed, could not surpass, and the best carver of the day might well be proud of.

On the subject of wood-carving—in which art I own I take great delight—my enquiries, or I should rather say my anxiety, to search out all that was curious in art, or pleasing as industrious, led me to the discovery of one of the most extraordinary specimens of native rustic genius and unremitting toil which it is possible to conceive; and while naming this fact I cannot but express my heartfelt sorrow that no generous patron or Christian heart should have been found to save the artist—for so even in his rusticity I may fairly name him—from penury and sin. But so it is, doubtless for some wise purpose; and yet I fancy I err not in thus

* This remark has no reference to the share he had in the production of Mr. Steevens's cabinet.

mentioning the facts of the case as I had them from more than one to whom the man is known. The work of art to which I allude is a model of Antwerp Cathedral, most elaborately carved in oak wood. The size of this model is very considerable. The tower, about four feet from the ground, may possibly convey to the mind some idea of its dimensions. Every pinnacle, every portion of ornamental carving is there; and when lighted up, even to the face of the clock, which it can be, with an organ playing in the room, it forms a specimen of cathedral beauty which would satisfy the Pope himself. But the most astonishing part of the whole work is the fact that he who carved it was a day labourer of the fields—his only tool a knife, his only knowledge of architectural design or proportion that which he gained from an old print which he had treasured up; and with this before him each night, after the labours of the day were over, as each morning ere they commenced, he would labour. The moment he had finished his time-allotted handy-work, he hid it away in a very large chest, and, strange to say, though thus he laboured for seven long years, till well-nigh concluded, no person was aware either of his toil or its products. As a correct architectural model it may be possibly

be defective; as a work of art and beauty it is worthy of all praise. Completed, he quitted the labours of the field, and conveyed his handy-work from town to town and village to village of the West; but whether in the first onset he gained more sixpences than had hitherto been his lot, the blessings of sobriety forsook him—the accursed love of drink, which invariably brings calamity, took possession of him. And this work of art which for years had been his delight became, from the want of some helping hand or some friendly advice, or some occasion like that now opened to the world, his bane and misfortune. Having given up a rural life of industry, to follow one of art, his hitherto simple pursuits of labour in the field became irksome; and as time advanced, without a helping hand to further the public exhibition of his genius, embarrassment followed till necessity obliged him to sacrifice the result of his industry and art for a tenth part of its real value. And thus one of the most ingenious specimens of uneducated talent stands open to the public gaze in the shop-window of an upholsterer. I urged on its possessor the advisability of sending it to the Exhibition, to which he assented, setting forth I trust in all truth, the history of its invention and its completion. It will be no discredit, even to that stupendous col-

lection of human industry. But alas! where is the mind that originated; where the hand that laboured, and the heart that beat with enthusiasm as each small-carved pinnacle of wood, each Lilliputian moulding and cornice, was added to the mimic edifice? Suffering in want and degradation in a felon's cell. Honest labour resigned for art—art, ill-compensated, ill-requited and unprotected, led to misfortune—misfortune to crime. The cravings of hunger, probably increased from the want of hitherto acquired stimulants, led the hand that had thus nobly worked to ignoble theft. I will pass over this painful tale with the simple expression of regret that some generous hand had not been stretched forward to aid and advise, as some generous heart to inculcate dictates of religion and honour into the heart of one, whom God had so gifted, when he might have hoped to have reaped some of the happy results which will doubtless accrue from the opportunity now afforded by the wide-world exhibition.

There were others in different positions of station and circumstances that it was my good fortune to visit in this quiet rural town in search of industry. But I must leave them, with the hope that we may be permitted to meet on a practical arena, where the dignity of labour will be fully sustained.

To those of my fair country-women, not less so to those of my countrymen, who hold the idea that foreign importations will be destructive to native industry, I would explain a few trifles precisely as I heard them from those of all the most competent to judge, inasmuch as they live by the very means of those arts and trades which others, having no knowledge of them, have so readily denounced to destruction and annihilation. In giving these facts to the public, however, I would desire to say nothing in the slightest degree tending to divulge the secrets of the crafts among whom I was so kindly welcomed. Yet, fair ladies, in my hope that you will find out an Englishman can make a glove and a shoe, and an Englishwoman a bonnet or a cape fit to bedeck your charming persons as to be exhibited before the polite world, I will tell you that nine-tenths of these little articles of refinement you purchase as from foreign lands are made in our own dear island, though the rivalry of trade does permit a trifling enlargement on truth a "wee bit" beyond prevarication, in the fact that the best gloves of Yeovil and of Worcester are at times submitted for public selection with labels, well fashioned to fascinate the eye, on which in golden letters appear "*gants de Paris*," "*gants de premier qualité*," and so forth. This, to designate it in plain

English, is a trick of the trade—not precisely an honest one. Yet who is to blame? Why, simply those who would not purchase a good article knowing it to be English, but always will a bad one, believing it to be French.

In a vast and very agreeable assembly which took place in the Public Hall, at Yeovil, where several master-manufacturers of gloves were present, who had most kindly shown me over their interesting establishments, and who attentively and courteously listened to my address on the subject of the Exhibition of Industry, one aged gentleman who for half a century had been a glove manufacturer thus spoke on the subject of protection of native industry, which some feared would be destroyed. In a few practical words he thus expressed himself:—

"Many years since, the glove trade of Yeovil was much depressed, and we found ourselves unable to compete with the influx of foreign goods, on the protection allowed to us. I was selected as the chairman of a deputation which proceeded to London to obtain an interview with the minister. We succeeded in bringing our case before the statesman; but he gave us no hope, and we returned home to Yeovil with the fear of ruin on all sides.

Happily among us there were men whose energies were not easily to be subdued, and we therefore came to the unanimous conclusion that, instead of giving way to misfortune we could not avoid at present, it was our duty to double our energy for the future, and thus protect ourselves. So we set to work with a right good will; God aided our labours, and I have lived to see the day when our town and trade are flourishing, and we fear not the power of successfully competing with all the world."

I could name a dozen instances of this nature, but while on the one hand I might trespass on grounds on which I have no desire unkindly to poach, I might induce others little interested in such details to lay down my book. I will, therefore, solely add that in the ancient town of Malmesbury the most beautiful lace is made by women and children equal to that of Honiton, and yet it rarely finds its way even to the neighbouring marts of Bath and Bristol. A chance traveller may perchance to pass there, and admiring the beauty of the workmanship purchase a few yards to present to his wife or his affianced, and on some occasions may take a score or two on speculation to the metropolis; beyond this it scarcely finds its way without the limits of the Duke of Beaufort's hunt.

The town trade is somewhat curiously carried out. For those who may be interested in such subjects, I will give a brief detail:—

"An aged woman has a lace school. Her scholars in the first instance pay two-pence a week to learn the trade, giving up the produce of their labour; having learnt it they still pay the same sum, but their handy-work then becomes their own. This is exchanged at a general shop for bread, bacon, tea, or ought else, and from thence is disposed of to trim the night-caps, or trousers, or collars, or ought else, belonging to fair ladies. Thus it is astonishing the amount of traffic that goes on, and yet how little money passes, a first-rate hand being enabled with great difficulty to clear twenty shillings a month."

All these little matters came to my notice during my visit throughout the district allotted to me; and I trust I may have induced even the poor women of Malmesbury to send something to the Exhibition which will not pass unnoticed, though placed side by side with that from the beauteous vale of Honiton and the hitherto more esteemed lace from Brussels and Valenciennes and Mecklin.

A word on hats, and I have done. Believe not, ye men of England, inasmuch as hats were first

invented in Paris four centuries gone by, that London cannot produce one far superior to aught to be obtained in that interesting city, with all its glorious arts and civilization. But such is by no means the belief, even of men whose heads are worthy of the best of covering. Like *gants de Paris*, so are *chapeaux de Paris*, exhibited in all the towns of England. Nevertheless every one of them is made in the land we live in. As an instance of this absurdity I once possessed a hat from the admirable shop of Messrs. Chapman and Moore, in Bond-street, of so good a quality that, having worn it for several months, not carefully, I deemed it worthy of renovation; so for the payment of one shilling it became apparently almost new. Conceive my astonishment, however, on beholding the well-known names of Chapman and Moore erased, and *chapeaux de Paris* inserted; fancy the indignity of this celebrated firm, on beholding such a desecration of their handy-work, which at first I did not discover! On walking down the street, it occurred to me, the weather being hot, to admire the interior of my new beaver. On observing the *chapeaux de Paris*, I instantly returned to the shop, fancying that I had appropriated that which was not mine.

"It is yours, I assure you, sir."

"Then why place this label in?"

"Solely that French hats are the fashion, and all our customers ask for them."

"Be it so; in future leave mine as you find it, or insert John Bull, or ought else. I am satisfied with native industry; no disparagement to my neighbours of republican France, whose country I admire and whose people I respect."

And now I must bid adieu once more to manufactories, shops, bricks and walls, interesting as they are, and fly away again o'er hill and dale, to vales and woodlands of the west.

CHAPTER VIII.

Once more on a gallant steed, with the clear sky of summer above, surrounded by a rich luxuriant English home landscape—what so delightful, what so exhilirating! Add to this a pleasant, well-informed companion. Who would desire more? If the spirit of envy entereth my heart more on one occasion than another, I must confess it is at such times as I behold a splendid horse, not seldom mounted by an indifferent rider, who possibly cares little for the noble animal and less for the healthy and all-pleasing recreation; yet, having the wealth, he bestrides a horse whose value exceeds the yearly income of many a hard-working servant of the Crown, whereas he would be equally well satisfied, were it not the fashion to be so mounted, on a

VALLEY, NEAR CREWKERNE.

quiet cob, value seven pounds. Yet why speak in envy of my neighbour's goods, with so much reason at the time to be satisfied with my own. A clever hackney fell to my lot, while the beautiful Arabian, with distended nostril inhaling the morning air, switched the offending flies from his flanks with his magnificent tail as we gently ascended the noble hill of Castle-ne-Roche, leading towards the quiet yet pleasant inland town of Chard, where night and day the powers of steam in a thousand varied and intricate ways assist man's mind to send forth to home and foreign marts muslin of the most delicate texture and curtains fit to grace the palace of a Sultan.

To you, my sporting friends, who love amid fair scenes to follow the Waltonian craft, I will say this pleasant spot is not difficult of access. A brief and delightful ride of scarce twelve miles from Taunton, o'er hill and through delightful valleys, will well repay you if your visit be solely to cast your fly on the rippling waters of the neighbouring trout streams. For my own part I have always been of opinion that the *de ambulatio per amena loca* is one of the most intellectual feasts with which we can be treated in our journey through life; and one of the heaviest deprivations with which I could be visited would be that of being

placed in a position of never beholding the beauties with which God has blessed the world, as the arts with which man has endeavoured to adorn it. To those who go with me in such sentiments, whether sportsman or perambulator, being at Chard, halt for the night; there is much to interest the inquiring mind; and with the sun once more mount your trusty steed and ride forward through country rich in pasture and orchards, (beautiful beyond measure when the many-coloured perfumed blossoms hang thick on the trees, or even in Autumn time when the golden fruit clusters in abundance,) till you reach the ancient Abbey of Ford. It is a spot of deep interest, and to me ever of pleasant memory. I will endeavour to create some of those feelings in the hearts of my readers. Not that I participate in the enthusiastic emotions which were kindled in the breast of St. Bernard at the sight of an Abbey or a Monastery, which led him to exclaim, "*Deus bone! quanta pauperibus procuras solatia!*" For, pardon me, gentlemen of the cowl and bead, that I never think of you, with few exceptions, but as somewhat over-indulgent gentlemen of the good things of this world. Though in former days I partook of your hospitality in Spain under circumstances, perchance, which did not precisely admit of discourtesy, yet I confess I have little of that

stoical philosophy which could leave me indifferent or unmoved to such a sight as that ancient Abbey, or indeed of any which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue.

"The man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warm amid the ruins of Iona."

And although we may look now on those ancient structures as former abodes of indolence and ease rather than as seats where literature was cultivated and the practical duties of religion and humanity exhibited, the study among its inmates of the ancient classics, and their preservation of those venerable relics, are proofs of their attention to the former; while their instruction of the ignorant, their humanity to the poor, and their relief to the stranger, attest, at least outwardly, the truth of the latter.

But it is not my desire to enter into a dissertation on monks and monasteries, though that of Ford is well worthy of a day passed within its interesting walls; and the present owner is not the man to say nay to him who knocks and asks in courtesy for admission. I will simply add that it was built so far back as the year 1141—old enough, forsooth, to satisfy as to years the most enthusiastic antiquarian

—by a good lady named Adeline, niece to William the Conqueror, who, chancing to meet with some poor travelling monks, and pitying their forlorn condition, thus addressed them:—

"Behold my manor, on which I now reside. It is sufficiently fertile. It is sheltered and shaded with wood. It is productive of grain and other fruits of the earth. Behold! I give it you in exchange for the barren lands of Brightly, together with our manor-house, for ever. Remove here until some more convenient monastery may be built for you on some other part of the estate; nor will we be wanting to you in this respect, but will give you our best assistance to carry on that building."

This young lady was, therefore, the founder of the abbey; and from what she stated of the beauty and luxuriance of the scenery in 1141 may be gathered a fair idea of its splendour in that of 1851. I shall pass over as probably uninteresting several successive ages during which the monks doubtless enjoyed themselves in this pleasant county and agreeable home, with its beautiful cloisters and chapel, and come down to the Gwyn family, whose last descendant dying a few years since, it was sold with the estate to its present owner.

In latter years the magnificent saloon and grand staircase bespeak by their elaborate carved work the master hand of Inigo Jones, by whom the ceilings in some of the rooms were executed, under the directions and at the expense of Edward Prideaux. The saloon contains the splendid tapestry from the cartoon of Raphael; and the following is an authentic account of the manner in which it came into the possession of a proprietor of Ford Abbey:—They were a present from Queen Anne to Francis Gwyn, who at the time was her Majesty's Secretary of War, having been found on board a Spanish galleon which was taken by one of our ships, and were intended as a present to the King of Spain, from Arras, in Flanders. The tapestry became the property of the Admiralty, and was given as above stated by the Queen to Mr. Gwyn. The cartoons are five in number, the subjects being —the men of Lystra sacrificing to Paul and Barnabas as Jupiter and Mercury; our Saviour, after his resurrection, delivering the keys of Heaven to St. Peter; Paul and John healing the sick at the beautiful gate of the temple; Ananias and Sapphira; and the miraculous draught of Fishes. The figures are very large, and the colours splendid, and the whole are in a very high degree of preservation, though the slight depredations of

intruding moths lead me to hope some course will be taken to protect such magnificent specimens of art from further molestation.

I have said enough, I would fain believe, to induce many of my fellow countrymen to wander to this beautiful edifice and linger many an hour amid the magnificent scenery by which it is surrounded. If they are lovers of antiquity and Nature, their curiosity will be amply repaid. Those who, having enjoyed this admirable scene, desire to follow amid the valley of sweet waters, through which a sparkling trout stream glides onwards till it joins the ocean near Charmouth, will find a pleasant little hostelry not far from the Abbey, where for a moderate outlay they may obtain bed and board such as the most fastidious might well be satisfied with; and there with rod in hand, while they cast the many-coloured fly across the winding waters, they may people the Abbey once more with its brotherhood of monks; and, endeavouring to forget the evils of such institutions, bless the days in freedom of civil and religious liberty in which we live.

As we rode along the varied lanes, admiring the clustering honeysuckle festooning the hedges, entwined with wild roses and clematis, my companion related a tale connected with the locality, which I

give here in the simple language in which it was told to me. The period, however, of its occurrence is sufficiently distant to have obliterated all recollection of its occurrence even from the memory of those now living in the very neighbourhood where it actually occurred.

"Here on this small knoll," said my fair companion, "not much beyond a half century gone by, stood a gibbet, on which the bones of as great a wretch as ever lived in the form of man, bleached by the air of heaven, hung as a horrid warning—happily now dispensed with—of the penalty of crime.

"I need not tell you that if smuggling exists even in the present day, notwithstanding all precaution on the coasts of England, at the period to which I allude it was merely considered as an illegal speculation—to term it by the mildest language—in which many classes embarked who held stations in life sufficient to guarantee, it might be supposed, their innocency and honour of the law. Such, however, was far from being the case; and the tale which I shall tell is a convincing proof, if proof were wanting, that those who conveyed the merchandize across the Channel played but a humble part, notwithstanding the danger, in com-

parison with those who carried on the traffic on land.

"The neighbourhood of Beer, on the coast of Devon, not five leagues from this spot, even to within the last twenty years, was celebrated as a harbour for the contrabandist. There, the moment the goods were run, according to smuggling principles, horses were prepared, the treasures were placed across their backs, and in droves, at times exceeding sixty in number, they were rapidly driven inland. The leading horse, generally termed the 'captain'—a most sagacious animal—was not always mounted. Sufficient that the word to start was given, and the cavalcade proceeded at a quick pace to their destination, following like a string of mules, flanked and guarded by armed men. Their depôts, or places for storing away spirits, tea, silk, or any other treasures, were, generally speaking, lonely and retired farm-houses, but more particularly small inland inns or public houses, and not seldom—truth will out—lordly castles.

"But my story is not with the former or the latter. Beneath the foot of yon hill, where the woodlands are now vast and luxuriant, and near which you will observe a road which winds over the summit, there stood, where now there stands I fancy on the same foundation, a farm-house or large

road-side halting-place for travellers. Four score years now past travelling in the west of England was an undertaking not seldom unattended with danger, and at times as difficult as fatiguing. Carriages to be hired there were few even for females, while the greater part of the male sex travelled across the country on horseback; and this roadside inn, distant ten miles from a town and even now secluded, was often resorted to for quiet or economy, or to divide the distance. All these facts are, however, so well known in the present state of society that I need not dwell on them. Suffice that on a dark and tempestuous night at the latter end of October, in the year 1770, a very young and beautiful lady, accompanied solely by a female servant not much older than herself, after a long and fatiguing journey, drove up to the house I have named in a crazy hired carriage. Though much-fatigued, her anxiety to proceed was so great that although cautioned as to the difficulties and dangers of the road—notwithstanding the tempestuous weather—she could not be prevailed on to stop at the town where she had last changed horses. But she was a woman of noble spirit, on her way to join him she loved most on earth—an officer who had just landed at Bridport from foreign

shores, and from whom she had been parted for two long years, after as many weeks of married happiness. Accompanied, therefore, by her faithful servant, little she thought of the badness of the roads, or the howling winds! Her heart was burning with love and affectionate desire to be one of the earliest, if not the first, to welcome him from whom she had been the last to part.

"Arrived at the lonely inn, she asked for horses. Much delay took place, and at last the ill-favoured features of the landlord appeared. Holding a lantern to the carriage, he declared with much apparent regret that he had really only one horse fit to travel, all the others being engaged. Engaged truly were they, on a smuggling expedition to the coast; for among his other bad qualities the host was one of the greatest contrabandist receivers in the county. Nevertheless a horse might possibly have been found, but that the post-boy—one of his smuggling confederates—had hinted that the two female travellers apparently possessed both money and jewels, were perfectly unprotected and unknown in that part of the county, and going he knew not where. This was quite sufficient. They were not the first who had been pillaged—even murdered. He hastened to open the carriage-door, intreated the ladies to alight, assured them of good accommodation, adding

that a night's rest would do them service; and he hoped on the return of day-light horses would be forthcoming to forward them on their way. Deep was the anxiety—intense the desire—of the young and loving wife to proceed, and liberal were her offers of remuneration to secure the means. The more she expressed her generosity, however, the more decided his determination to detain her; alternative there was none, and at length, accompanied by her maid, she alighted. The good accommodation promised, however, proved very indifferent. A small sitting-room, in which a miserable fire flickered, opened into a smaller bedroom, in the corner of which was a wretched bed. For this, however, the landlord apologised, adding, that if the lady could put up with it other accommodation would be found for her maid. To this, however, (notwithstanding an apparent earnestness on the part of the man to induce her to submit to the arrangement,) she positively demurred; and having dismissed him with an order for some refreshment, they agreed, that half-undressed, both mistress and maid should share the couch, till the break of day enabled them to proceed.

"Refreshment, such as it was, being produced, the landlord officiously attended the placing of their

baggage, as also arranging the table. On wine, however, being ordered, he disappeared with alacrity to produce it; but when the young lady drank off a glass, a country girl, who had assisted in the arrangement of the table and who had been closely watched, caught the eye of the traveller, and pointing to the bottle exclaimed in a whisper —'beware!'

"But I will pass over the events of this distressing night, which happily ended so pleasantly to the intended victim.

"Landlord and servant departed. The suspicions of the travellers being excited, they carefully abstained from touching more of the wine, which was evidently drugged—so effectually drugged that no sooner had they laid down to rest than the mistress, carefully watched over by her faithful attendant, fell into a sound and happy sleep—a sleep sound as the sleep of death! This was evidently the desire of the host, but the eye of God watched over her! About one in the morning the maid, having with great difficulty, being very much fatigued, kept herself awake, heard a light footstep move along the passage. The bedroom door opened. Her mistress still slept soundly, with her head half-buried beneath the bed-clothes, on the outside of which the servant had laid herself, almost fainting with terror; yet,

still keeping up her courage, she also pretended to be asleep, when a man holding in his hand a small lantern, cautiously entered. He examined the trunks, looked on the table, as if in search of valuables, and then, approaching the bed, watched the apparent sleepers; at the moment a deep-drawn, almost convulsive sigh, from the real sleeper, caused him to draw back for an instant; in so doing, however, he drew from his bosom a long knife, but all being hushed again as if in sleep, he passed his lamp across their eyes, and proceeded to search the pockets of the clothes they had taken off, possessing himself of a pocket-book and its valuable contents. At this moment, however, thanks be to God, the heavy tread of horses and accoutrements, as of a body of cavalry, were heard without the house, and soon a knocking at the inn-door, and several voices clamorous for admission, changed the scene; muttering a fearful oath he hastily blew out the light and decamped. At first no admission or attention was given to those without; but the faithful attendant hearing him descend, regained her courage—first shook her mistress and endeavoured, though in vain, to awake her—then flew to the casement, threw it wide open, and called again and again loudly for help. The astonishment of those below was, for a moment

great, for the night had now calmed, and the moon shone brightly, when they beheld a female form at the window, and heard a female voice appeal for succour. 'Dismount!' was the instantaneous order given by a manly, yet gentle voice, to an assembled troop of cavalry below. 'Dismount'—and—'Holloa,' you within; if you do not instantly throw wide your doors they shall be shivered in a thousand atoms.' Ten minutes scarcely elapsed ere the head of the loving wife was reposing on the breast of him so dear to her, and for whose sake she had run such risk. Roused at last by the noise, she had awakened from her heavy slumber caused by the drugged wine, and hastily with the help of her servant adjusting her dress, no less to her delight than astonishment, was received in the arms of her deliverer—and that deliverer her husband!"

CHAPTER IX.

"A tale of fiction, bearing some probability of truth—a chapter of romance to fill up a book of reality!" Some may thus exclaim. What then? If it has caused them aught of interest it will suffice. There are others, however, who will recognize facts, and believe in one of some hundreds of similar occurrences which actually took place in the West, as in almost every part of England, in less civilized days than our own. Recollect, we had no city or rural police "lang syne;" and if now, when the most remote portions of the land are brought within a brief distance of the metropolis, and knowledge, education, with a higher sense of religion, and the blessings of peace and industry, are spread far and wide, we hear of the blackest crimes being

committed during the light of day in places within an hour's journey from London, what reason have we for doubting that the worst of crimes should have been committed in remote, secluded districts, rarely visited—almost unknown, save to the passing traveller or dweller in the neighbourhood? Thus was it then.

"The joy of meeting so unexpectedly and so happily after long absence—previous fears and anxieties calmed and allayed—when the light of day once more broke again, instead of pursuing her journey, the now happy wife accompanied her husband back to the fair town from whence she had come.

"It appeared that having landed sooner than was expected, he had received orders to move forward as soon as possible to the city of Bristol, and thus, with the promptness of a good soldier, had lingered not on the line of march. Well was he repaid, for an hour later his happiness might have been for ever crushed.

"I need scarcely add that the landlord had been immediately secured, and his house and premises strictly searched, when not only vast cellars filled with valuable contraband goods were found, but convincing proof that robbery, not seldom accompanied by murder, had been perpetrated. He was tried, found guilty, and condemned at Taunton;

and here on this green mount, as I have told you, his bones bleached and rattled in the midnight winds—long the horror of the traveller, and a warning to his accomplices.

"But such recollections as these are by no means singular. Even in the immediate neighbourhood of the pleasant town of Taunton scenes of horror have been enacted which are fresh in the memory of many living. Indeed, an aged but eccentric baronet resided not two score years since within sound of the bells of St. Mary's, who numbered among his followers a steward in whom he placed the greatest confidence. If I err not, many a time he had been warned with unpleasant hints that his trust had been misplaced. What then? His faith was strong, and his character somewhat opinionated. Nevertheless, like many others, he was deceived.

"It was late one night, or rather in the first hour of the morning, that he was awakened from a sound sleep by a slight noise in his bed-room. He looked from his bed and beheld a strange man, disguised and armed with a pistol. Being both powerful and brave, he instantly assailed the intruder, wrenched the pistol presented at his head, ere fired, from the villain's hand, and throwing him on the ground, shouted aloud for help. The mur-

derer was secured, and proved to be no other than the unjust steward, who, it was subsequently ascertained, had robbed a kind and liberal master to some extent. He was tried, condemned, and hanged on a little green not two miles from the town, where a gallows was erected.

"This fact is well known to many now living, and on the morning of the execution the eccentric baronet appeared himself at the foot of the gallows as he declared, to see the villain 'fairly done to death.' A high ladder was placed below the scaffold for the culprit to mount, but not sufficiently high to please the once fond master; for there he stood, with eyes distended and hands firmly pressed, exclaiming as the criminal mounted each step, 'Higher! Make the villain get higher! Higher! Higher, I say—that the lower he may fall.'"

"It is strange that these fair scenes should teem with such recollections," I replied; "but so is it willed. I was only recently perusing an early number of the *Taunton Courier*, of the year 1817, when I read the following:—

"'ABHORRENT NOTICE.—It was reported a few days since that the skin of the unfortunate wretch, James Marsh, who was executed for the murder of Robert Parsons, of Glastonbury, was brought into

Taunton for the purpose of being tanned. Incredulous as this may appear, the fact is too well established to leave the slightest doubt of its authenticity.'

"I can scarcely fancy that the most savage nations were ever guilty of an action more disgraceful. On mentioning this in mere passing conversation with a friend, and adding my disgust, he calmly replied, 'It is perfectly true.' Moreover, a book was bound in it. And this is not a single instance, for a similar circumstance took place at Bristol, and the 'amiable' owner of this human relict of barbarity, having collected the printed evidence and the account of the trial, bound it with the skin of the malefactor, and placed it in his library. Happily, most happily, civilization is now the order of the day; and the land we live in is as well peopled as it is fair. But you have excited my curiosity, so let us ride onwards to view a spot alike interesting in beauty and saddened by crime."

I may here remark that in this neighbourhood there are some of the finest elms and oaks in the kingdom, of which possibly Mr. Steevens can give a better account than can I who speak more as regards their beauty of outline and luxuriant foliage than the excellence of their wood, of which, how-

ever, I had sufficient proof. My last day amid these pleasant scenes of Nature's varied charms was passed in those of a different feature, yet possibly to many of more interest—riding along the splendid ridge of hills called the Black Downs, which from the south overlook far and wide the golden vale of Taunton Dean; and looking towards the east and north-east, the view has no mountainous boundary until it reaches the Polden Hills—a distance of twenty miles. The climate of this vale is peculiarly mild and serene, and the soil highly fertile and productive. Indeed it may be truly called the "land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey." Passing onwards along this splendid range, with a bright sky above, and clear horizon, Taunton and its beautiful church towers lay nestling as in a sheltered, luxuriant and well-watered garden, with Bridgwater in the distance, and the channel, clear to the view; while through the rich vale as a snake, or a war-horse snorting, and throwing forth curling smoke, the train steaming onwards in its rapid course, might well be traced—a practical, all-powerful illustration of advancing genius and art. Not a yard, not a spot, along this mountain brow—if mountain it may be termed—but is attractive in variety of outline and grandeur of panoramic scenery.

Ride on, traveller, and thank God in fulness of heart that the land is merry England! Or if perchance you follow my footsteps, you will ever and anon draw the rein in admiration and delight. When the snow of winter lingers there—which even at so great an elevation is but seldom for a length of time—perchance your roadway may prove somewhat bleak. What then? The theatre you will look on, though with a shifted scene from that of summer time, will be scarce less attractive.

About nine miles ride along this ridge, I attained the object I had sought—a column raised in honour to the hero of a hundred battles—the veteran Wellington. No imposing architectural beauty marks this object of interest; no Corinthian base, no fluted shafts, no Grecian wreaths. It stands a rude, proud, almost unfinished, ill-raised, lofty pillar, to the Prince of Victory, through the centre of which a narrow and dirty staircase leads the curious through air somewhat foul, and darkness most unpleasing, to the pinnacle—truly it may be said—of splendour. What think you of the difficulty and disgust of your ascent—what of the rude and ungraceful column itself—when you stand on the small gallery that surrounds it and behold a picture of England which would well repay a journey to and from the mighty Babylon for half an hour so passed? The

panorama I need scarcely describe, as I have already dwelt so largely on the rich luxuriant beauty of this vale. So, having gratified the eye as the senses, descend to the grassy platform on which it is erected, and share with us the refreshment which two dear friends who had driven to the spot in a poney carriage, had kindly provided. As we reclined on the smooth, sheep-shorn, green velvet carpet on which the column stands, I will tell you that our bivouac was sheltered by a fir plantation, beyond which in undulating profusion wild and heather-clad hills, with well-cultivated and wooded bases, spread onwards towards the garden of Devon, while below the spot we had selected a wood of oaks such as England alone can boast of, and o'er which we looked, formed a graceful and delightfully refreshing barrier of foliage to the richly-cultivated slope which gradually descends to the cheerful little town of Wellington, the smoke of whose chimneys, rising in the clear air, marks its position and adds beauty to the scene.

And here in this rural and favoured little town industry and art work together—agricultural pursuits and mechanical ingenuity go side by side in the race for man's comfort and improvement. But that is not all; it can boast of one of the largest, and unquestionably one of the most admirably

supported, manufactories in the West of England for the production of blankets and serge, the property, as I believe is a considerable estate in land around it, of the Messrs. Fox, long residents in the town and neighbourhood—Quakers by form of religion, charitable and highly-esteemed gentlemen by character and repute.

Speaking of manufactories doubtless leads the minds of many, particularly of those unaccustomed to aught but rural scenery and agricultural pursuits, to fancy high chimneys, with clouds of blackening smoke; ill-paid, over-worked, unhealthy mechanics; narrow and crowded streets; myriads of children; immorality and insobriety. The imagination in this case would happily far outstrip reality. God grant it does so elsewhere! Certainly in this era of civilization it is a greatly-exaggerated picture in most cases. With reference to that of Wellington I must say, with what pleasure I admit, that all I saw, all I felt, on the occasion was at variance with the supposed theoretical opinions I have advanced.

Having descended from the glorious eminence which I have named, to the little market town, it was in the course of duty (since in the course of pleasure and friendship) that I called on Mr. Frederick White, a gentleman well known and as

highly esteemed among his fellow townsmen for whom he acts, if I err not, as a leader in all things tending to their comfort and advantage, as did he with enthusiasm as honorary secretary to the local committee of the Great Exhibition of 1851. To him I am indebted for much information as regards the place and its neighbourhood; and I mention names solely that I write facts, and thus have an opportunity of expressing my acknowledgment for acts of courtesy and kindness which otherwise might be unrequited. By this gentleman I was informed that the interesting column which I have named had been erected by public subscription, to which the inhabitants of this small and charmingly-situated and well-provided town of Wellington had greatly contributed, in honour to him —the illustrious hero of a hundred fights—who took his title therefrom, and whose glories in the name of England they were so praiseworthily desirous to secure to posterity.

The column itself stands on a portion of a small estate which his Grace holds in the neighbourhood, and, as I have said, though boasting of little architectural beauty, it is far and wide a land-mark on which no Englishman can look without honest pride. The little town gave its all; it could give no more. The column rose stone by stone; and he to whom

the honour was paid visited the spot on its erection and ascended to its pinnacle. What more? Means were wanting even for its perfect completion in such form as was intended; and here a stone crumbles—there is one displaced. The beautiful platform around it, intended as a well-kept area, is a wild heath. The half-made road to its approach is almost inaccessible save in midsummer time. The little hostelry built near at hand, also on a charming eminence, remains unused, seldom resorted to—half farm, half beer-house. And thus, unfortunately, like many other similar mementos of our country's heroes, it will remain if no enthusiastic lover of such proud works steps forth to succour this massive emblem of man's labour to man's honour of his race, for another race to witness, crushed and o'erthrown by the rude blast and pitiless storm, which like an avalanche rushes towards its exposed situation till that which should have stood for centuries in its pride of place, in splendid memory of a chief's achievements never surpassed, is a mere mass of crumbling stone.

As I have said, the natural advantages of its situation are peculiarly happy. It proudly marks the line of the horizon, and overhangs the great direct road through the south-west district of Eng-

land. No passing eye can escape it. Its lofty head towers in view from sea to sea.

The period of its erection being decided on, and the highest point of Black Down Hill overhanging the vale of Taunton selected as the spot, it was proposed to enclose three adjacent allotments whereon to build dwellings, which should be inhabited by three old soldier natives of England, Ireland and Scotland. These men were to keep the ground around the column, as the column itself, in order,—one of them being chosen from the artillery to take charge of the ordnance, while at midsummer time the country all around were to meet in festive hilarity on this glorious spot, there to pass a merry day in festive and athletic games, for one of which a prize called "Shaw's prize," was to be given—in memory of that gallant life-guardsman's bravery at Waterloo, who was a native of Devon.

Such were the intentions of the committee constituted to carry out these pleasing measures—measures which were enthusiastically responded to by the public when the memory of glorious feats performed by British soldiers were fresh in all hearts; when tales of gallant victories were listened to with delight. But the time passed, and now English victories and English soldiers have given way to thoughts of things that are, not have been.

On the 20th of October, 1817, the foundation-stone was laid; and it was there and then decided that the following inscriptions should be placed on the three sides of the column. On the south—"Assaye, India, protected." On the west—"Spain and Portugal rescued; Vimeira, Torres Vedras, Salamanca, Badajos, Vittoria, &c.;" and on the north-east—"Republican tyranny subdued; Bayonne, Toulouse; the Netherlands saved; Europe delivered; Waterloo." Where are all the heart-beatings of enthusiasm—where all the pride—where all the real inspirations of glory emanating from such sentiments as these? Surely not in the crumbling stones which lay scattered around its base. Surely not in the apparent neglect which reigns on a scene formed by Nature and set apart by man in memory of unequalled valour, to be recalled annually to the multitude by festive and healthful enjoyments which never take place.

To this gentleman was I also indebted for an introduction to Mr. Fox, junior, who most kindly accompanied me over the whole of his manufactory. And in thus recalling to my recollection this interesting visit I would offer a heartfelt prayer to God that none of these depôts for gathering together of industry in ardent labour are in reality,

though doubtless they so greatly differ in outward appearance, less desirable than that which I beheld.

It was a glorious evening in the smiling month of May that we walked through the small town, and thence down a pleasant pathway to Mr. Fox's establishment. Doubtless the golden sun ever throws a charm o'er the dullest landscape, and the often otherwise unpleasing locality becomes pleasing. Indeed, when is not the heart cheered and gladdened by its rays, causing man to look more kindly on human nature and more charitably towards his fellow men? Such is generally the case, as is a manufactory not seldom a seat of ill-requited labour and foul air; but in this case I must refer to my friend the Colonel, whom I have but seldom mentioned of late, inasmuch as we advanced in our peregrinations he took such an ardent delight in all he saw of his native country that I no longer felt it necessary to comment on his having permitted me for once to overrule his inclinations for a summer's tour on the continent. As we stood within the square of the manufactory, after having visited its extensive interior, and watched the passing forth of men, women and children who, their allotted labours being over, were hurrying away—many, I trust, to enjoy the still remaining hours of light amid

beauties of Nature in the full enjoyment of fresh air and hilarity—he exclaimed enthusiastically on their healthy appearance; and as for the manufactory and its general air of freshness and comfort, the charming country which surrounds it, the flowing trout-streams which turn the all-powerful wheel, and whole appearance was such, that to bear away the steaming power, and the wheel, and the looms, was well nigh all that was required to make of it —not a chateau in *Espagne*—but a chateau in Old England, in which even his Grace might deign to reside, looking daily on a monument erected to his honour as to the glory of British arms, who wreathed the laurel crown around the brow of him who led them on to victory; and while praising God for long years of peace, he may depart from among us at four-score years and ten, leaving for future ages to say—

"Still do ye stand, colossal monument
Of days departed—mould'ring to decay.
Oh! would that ye might warn us that at best
Frail are our deeds, and frailer still ourselves;
That, like the rainbow of a weeping sky,
We rise, we shine, we change, and pass away!"

CHAPTER X.

A brief halt at the pleasant little inland town of Crewkerne, and I bid farewell to the beautiful county of Somerset. Never do I pass through it —never do I dwell on the abundant beauties and advantages with which the Almighty has favoured it—than I give it the palm over almost all other parts of the world, Devon excepted. Wood and water, rich land and fine climate, all belong to it. Its people are industrious and loyal; its towns interesting, beautifully situated and bountifully supplied, while its inhabitants are moral and free—free, albeit they rose to arms to crush a tyrant and support an usurper, though still honouring the crown. Beautiful county! long will my heart recollect with gratitude the pleasing

days I have passed amid your fair scenery, and with your kind and hospitable inhabitants. Many a spot have I seen in foreign lands, many a glorious mountain range, many an Alpine forest, placid lake and splendid city. I have listened to the guitar touched by the hand of the Spanish maiden with skill unrivalled on the Almada of a Biscayan city; I have listened to the shepherd's pipe on the mountains of Switzerland, heard the rich language of Italy on the banks of the Como, walked side by side with the Albanian in search of game in the wilds of the Morea, and passed many and many a day in the rural districts of Republican France. How often have I also dwelt in recollection of other countries and other people, returning, however, always and ever with unalloyed pleasure and grateful satisfaction to the Land of the West, which as a resting-place is unrivalled in all that can make life enjoyable with moderate means!

The lightning flashed, the thunder roared, on the first occasion that I ever beheld the quiet little town of Crewkerne, formerly a bustling market town, the main high way through which countless carriages and coaches passed on their onward route to the city of the west—now a peaceful rural spot, pleasantly situated—a rural retirement of industry and ease. Notwithstanding the storm, as I drove through the

street I beheld large placards against the walls, setting forth that a lecture on the subject of chivalry would take place the following evening at the Mechanics' Institution.

THE SILVER WELL.

Now I have ever held the opinion—an opinion which time only confirms—that institutions, either literary or mechanical (the name implies no absolute difference as to rules or advantages) are a blessing incalculable, more particularly in remote inland towns, when the long winter evenings arrive, where

many a pleasant hour is passed in listening to the information imparted by others or in reading books and papers probably otherwise unattainable, at all events in rural districts, save at the club or the billiard-table or the beer-shop. At such institutions, I fully believe and am certain, many a young mind is and has first been induced to select a line of life which, steadily followed out, has led to respect and opulence, that otherwise might have been frittered away in idleness, ignorance and poverty.

Seeing this placard, I came to the reasonable conclusion that probably, secluded as this little town might have been in former days, a good spirit was now alive, and knowledge was their loadstar. Why then, when larger towns, inhabited by the subjects of our beloved Sovereign, were all eager for and desirous to break a lance in the great tournament of industry of 1851, should not the bold men of Crewkerne be permitted to buckle on their armour, burnish up their weapons and take part in this world-wide feast of reason and labour? It was decidedly my duty to give them the opportunity, at all events, of knowing something of industry as well as chivalry.

The perusal of "Don Quixote" is a pleasant winter evening's pastime, which for the time being

ever falls with a grateful ray of solace on the saddest heart; but the reading of the still more voluminous volume which speaks of a life of labour, its hopes and struggles—the refinement of art, with its all-absorbing and varied influence—mechanics and manufactures—man's labour and man's mind—is a subject which comes home to us all. So I wrote at once to the secretary of the institution, and offered my humble services to give, in behalf of the Royal Commission, such information as was in my power on the subject of the Exhibition. Immediately, I may almost add gratefully, my offer was accepted; and an early evening being appointed, after being kindly welcomed and hospitably entertained at the residence of a gentleman who subsequently took the chair, and whose courtesy I shall ever hold in pleasing recollection, I met in that pleasant rural town, in comparison with the number of its inhabitants, one of the largest and most pleasing assemblies it was my good fortune to address throughout the district allotted to me. Men of all parties, professions, and grades, mingled there, the number of ladies being almost equal to the male portion of my audience; and herein I offer them my good wishes that happiness, combined with industry, may be their lot in life, for the kind and apparently intense interest with which they lis-

tened to, I fear, my simple details of a great subject, as for their unusual marks of approbation.

I have dwelt thus briefly on the subject of Crewkerne and its inhabitants to show how fervently and truly the people of England, even in the smallest towns, cling to all which tends in honour to the Crown, as to the welfare and onward march of civilisation in this favoured Protestant land.

And now, hastening over country more bleak to the eye, yet still offering varied and extensive landscapes of our English home, I pass through the little village of Mileyard, famed for its trout-streams—worthy, sporting friends, of a visit; and thence, beholding the domain of a Sheridan—a name sacred in memory to wit and intellect—I entered the town of Dorchester. Yet, lingering not there, I sped onwards by railway to Wareham, an account of which place I must reserve to another chapter.

As I sat within the railway—I must own to me one of the most unpleasant lines as far as I took advantage of it—rather a curious companion made the way if not agreeable, at all events amusing. I will give what passed to my readers. There may be some who will read it with more gusto than will they aught of the scenery or industry of the people of this land. Who he was, what he

was, or whence he came, I know not; and not being generally communicative in railways or public conveyances, though ever ready to gain information by the way, I replied but briefly to questions almost as briefly put. And what was strange, though I fancy perfectly true, there was no other person in the carriage but myself and companion; and I truly believe not in the whole train from Dorchester to Wareham. We sat opposite. As the train started I uttered not a word, neither did my companion till we reached the first station. He then put his head out of the window, and thus addressed me:—

"The night is moonful."

"Is it? I fancied it was only the first quarter."

"You doubt me?"

"Not in the least, I assure you."

"It's a fine night."

"Beautiful!"

"So I said at first."

"I ask your pardon. I fancied you meant the moon was at its full."

"You Englishers are fanciful."

"You are not an Englishman?"

"No; not a native born. Are you?"

"Yes."

"Where do you come from?"

"Dorchester."

"Where are you going?"

"Wareham."

"Is it a city?"

"No."

"A town?"

"Yes."

"That's what I meant. You doubt me?"

"Not in the least, I assure you,"—(beginning to feel nervous. He might desire to shoot me. We were alone.)

"What's your name?"

"Herbert."

"Oh! Where do you live?"

"In Gloucestershire."

"Fine place?"

"Yes."

"Large town?"

"No. I speak of the county."

(His head out of the window.) "Yes, it is a moonful night! Is the place like this?"

(I thought he meant the station where we then stopped.) "By no means."

"You doubt me?"

"Not in the least. The land is richer, the prospect fairer—more wooded."

"I meant your house?"

"Oh!"—I was on the point of adding, 'Why not say so, then?' but I recollected that a mild answer turneth away wrath—so I replied again, "Not in the least."

Here he took another tack.

"You know all the ministers, of course?"

Now, as it is by no means unusual thus to denominate in the present times ministers of religion, who in my school-days were more generally alluded to as parsons—a good old name for some of the best of men—I replied, "Some, who reside in the neighbourhood."

"Oh! aye! you doubt me," again burst forth, when I began to feel somewhat angry; but at last I discovered this "doubting" meant simply misunderstanding, when he added:—

"Ministers of your neighbourhood! No, Sir; Ministers of State!—Russell, Granville, Truro and Brougham, that was."

This was a poser. I owned to some personal knowledge of a few of the Right Honourable gentlemen forming her Majesty's Government, as of most by sight; but courtesy compelled me to admit that, however justified by birth or position, "it was not my habit thus familiarly to allude to them."

"Not thus to allude to them! Is not England

a free country; and are not they men, like ourselves?"

"True," I observed, "they are. And this, in my opinion, is the only really free country in the world; for all that respect to position, either from rank—if that rank be supported by high worth, or, what far more claims admiration, high eminence derived from genius used for the benefit of the nation—is ever granted, and justly granted, even by those who hold the most liberal opinions. 'Familiarity breeds contempt,'" I was about to add, but I did not quite like the look of my *vis-a-vis*, so I simply added, that "a vulgar idea of equality, in my humble opinion, was the greatest proof of what mis-termed liberty would end in if entrusted to a mob."

"You doubt me?" he again said. "I think gentlemen are gentlemen, and nothing more—(he did not look much like one); therefore why not Brougham, as well as 'my lord,' or aught else."

In this, however, I by no means concurred, and was therefore silent.

Not so, my friend. He commenced again, by informing me that "he was the bearer of a letter to the Right Honourable the Minister of Foreign Affairs—(if I so wished him to be termed)—re-

questing that he might be appointed to a Consulship in America."

The manner in which he spoke of his expectations of an interview and as to the appointment he sought was really such that I longed for my journey to be over, that I might laugh at the whole affair, as I do now in mere recollection of it. I fully believe he fancied he had nothing more to do than to pull the Minister's bell to gain admittance into his house and his favour. Indeed I can fancy nothing more or less than a knock at the door, and *ecce* a servant. "Palmerston within?" "Yes, Sir." Applicant—"How are you, Pal? (giving him one finger). I want a Consulship; not having one vacant, I will accept any good place you have to offer." Would that Dickens had been present! I doubt not but that my free and easy friend would have highly amused him.

I have alluded to this absurd journey by railway, having nothing to describe of the country, which is without interest by moon-light, whatever it may be by the light of day. Arrived at length at the Wareham station, I bid adieu to my companion, with a hope that he might attain his wishes. Not having seen his name *Gazetted* as Consul or Consul-General, or even noticed as having dined or

been at the receptions of the noble Foreign Secretary, I conclude he has altered his opinions, and I trust renounced the habit of saying, "Do you doubt me?"

CHAPTER XI.

A chapter in memory of Wareham, and my pleasant task draws near to its close. May my humble endeavours to amuse, if not to instruct, prove but a source even of light interest to a few hundreds among the millions of my countrymen, and it is possible I may have the pleasure of wandering among the woodlands again, as perchance seeing that noble Exhibition for the promotion of which I laboured with zeal and enthusiasm. If not, I must even solace myself with the recollection that many a winter's evening has been agreeably passed in recalling to mind the scenes and persons I have named, rather than in dwelling on the cares of life allotted to us all.

Having quitted my doubting, and to me still doubtful, companion, both as to position and station, I drove in one of those most disagreeable conveniences called in the lower world a "Bus," to the Lion of Wareham. Whether his majesty was a white lion, a golden lion, or a red lion, recollection will not bear me out. Suffice, he was neither a roaring or a pugnacious one, for he received me cordially; and I found myself located in one of the cleanest and most agreeable dens it has ever been my good fortune to visit amid the rural districts. I say this with more pleasure, for it is ever a pleasant task to speak well of one's neighbours.

How long the waiter has held his own there I know not; but to look at him, good man, one would imagine that he had been born, bred and nurtured there, and, as a sort of fixture, handed over to successive landlords—a standing dish, rivaling the cold pies he produced matitunally at the breakfast table. At all events, he was most attentively careful of the guests, both as regards their numerous requirements of the kitchen as the cellar, each department being good of its kind and abundant. I fear me, good man, he took less care of himself, though perchance rotundity of form and face does not always imply good living. If so

be, the falling off in his nether limbs spoke loudly of starvation—a positive atrocity in that land of plenty.

My bed, as my bed-room, was clean, airy, and of sufficiently luxurious size to call forth sound sleep, even with the thermometer at eighty. I say this for the sake of those who may perchance visit this pleasant town of Dorsetshire. Look out for the Lion. He is as tame as those of Van Amburgh.

The morning that I found myself there located was one of the three hottest of the summer past, —unluckily the third, for it ended in a thunder-storm which will be long recollected in the west of England, proving for once that our Republican friend had some ground for his assertion that "an English summer was composed of three fine days and a thunder-storm." So be it, if we have a succession of brief ones instead of an uninterrupted broiler.

The water with which I was abundantly supplied, as should be the case in all well-regulated establishments, was intended to be cold, but the weather did not admit the truth of any such assertion in fact, for the more I sponged the hotter I became. Nevertheless, I was determined to make the best of my time; and being one of those who

prefer a blazing sun to the chilly and unnatural cold of summer, I prepared myself for an early visit to the town and its interesting neighbourhood. Scarcely had I descended, however, and commenced an attack on the pasty set before me by the attendant I have named, than his worship the Mayor did me the honour of a visit; and having talked over the intended meeting which had been advertised for the evening, as regarded the Exhibition, he kindly suggested that in the first instance, if agreeable, I should accompany him thus early to a scene of agricultural industry which was appointed for that day at Lulworth Castle. To this I most readily assented, and ere the clock struck nine we were riding over a hot and dusty road, on each side of which acres and acres of peat and heather land stretched far and wide. Nevertheless, the marked difference from the rich woodland vales of Somerset which I had so recently left was in itself a source of interest; and the fund of information so courteously afforded me by my companion of all connected with the district was more than sufficient to banish the discomforts even of heat and dust. At length we passed the dreary waste—such it appeared in summer's brightness; what it must be on the dark and blustering night

on which my pen traces from memory that agreeable day, with a bright fire at my back, before which reclines a noble dog, I must leave to the imagination of others. I say we passed the heather land, and at once entered through dark plantations towards a pleasant little village; thence through some ancient gates, towards the handsome, massive stone building called Lulworth Castle, in description of which is not my intention to speak. Turn to the history of Dorset, if you desire it; your search will well requite you. The park and woodlands that surround it have many beauties, from whence, here and there, a view of the glorious ocean, on which the sun glittered and sparkled like diamonds, added greatly to the charm. But we had come there to witness a scene of agricultural industry, and we were well repaid.

In the park at least a score of athletic mowers contended for the prize. The feat required was that of mowing half an acre of grass in a given time, the umpires to decide both as to the merits of each mower, as to the time and manner of performance. The theatre on which this labour took place was in a portion of the park close to the castle; and the actors manfully contended, notwithstanding the heat, for the prize. I confess that I

am no judge, save as a general lover of agricultural pursuits, of the excellence of the labour; but I can at least vouch for the courage and earnestness of the labourers. The grass, however, appeared light, and the weather had parched it up.

Having passed an hour in witnessing this pleasing scene, we next proceeded to another of equal interest—that of sheep-shearing, which was carried out with a similar good spirit. But time waits for no man; so, leaving his Worship *pro tem.*, I rode back rapidly to the town, having, however, first learnt that it was the intention of Mr. Weld, the lord of the Castle—perhaps better known to many as the owner of the fleetest yachts in the world—to send a model of a beautiful craft to the Exhibition of 1851.

Arrived once more at the Lion, I dismounted from my gallant, or rather his Worship's gallant, steed, and having washed the Dorset dust from my face, without loss of time I hastened to the residence of Mr. ——, the obliging owner of the largest of the Purbeck pits, who with his brother most kindly accompanied me over their valuable dominions of clay. Some of the happiest days of my life have been passed in the army under as gallant a Colonel as ever drew a sword or served a nation—thus the term 'pipe-clay,' was not unfamiliar to my ears.

But till that day it was pipe-clay, and nothing more—vulgar pipe-clay—but since changed to pipe-clay estimated as a lump of gold, instead of a white ball for a penny.

On arriving at the abode of this truly well-informed and courteous gentleman, I was ushered into a drawing-room, on the table of which was placed a very fine dish of strawberries. Thirst and heat said decidedly "yes;" propriety decidedly "no." Heat and thirst, however, carried the day, and I popped one into my mouth, of size and flavour unsurpassed; and thus having purloined, I was induced to enquire from whence came the luscious fruit, which I subsequently found were grown in great abundance in the neighbourhood; but in addition to this refreshing luxury, I also discovered another very desirable and exceedingly agreeable acquisition to a country town, viz., almost all the houses, though entered from the street, had large and most delightful flower-gardens attached, to which the windows of the drawing-rooms opened. But Mr. —— enters, offers a glass of excellent sherry, and announces his dog-cart at the door. I take the seat of honour by his side, his brother sits *dos a dos*, and we start once more, though by a different route to that of Lulworth Castle, towards the ruins of a still more celebrated stronghold of

ancient times—Corfe Castle. My object, however, in this instance, was not the castle, but the clay-pits, though I have ever regretted time did not permit me to take them both. Why not some future time? Pray God I may!—and if so, I shall not forget the strawberries.

In the meantime, I appeal more particularly to those most industrious ladies whose dominions are the kitchen—not less so to those whose duties confine them to the constant handling of earthen pots and pans—to read this brief account of a day at the Pits of Purbeck; and you also, gentlemen as ladies, of divers positions in society, who look on delf and earthenware, and even china, as mere inexhaustible articles, never to be broken and re-bought—could you but have wandered as did I during many hours of that scorching summer's day over acres and acres beneath which the rich layers of clay were embedded, and have witnessed the brawny limbs and athletic forms of a thousand hard-working and sun-burnt labourers, you would henceforth regard both pot and pan with somewhat more of veneration and sympathy, and carry on your "jugurthian" war with less destructiveness. Yet in all admiration of that working race—fine specimens of Englishmen as I ever beheld—it may be as well you continue the

smashing system, for the more destruction the more required, and so clay must be dug and the digger paid.

One little circumstance named to me by my courteous conductor is sufficient proof of the trades' variations. Speaking of the exportation of clay, as of the amount in tons annually consumed by the manufacturers in England, he observed:

"There is no better sign of the times than the produce required from the clay-pit. Provisions being cheap, as they now are, thanks be to God! our sale increases amazingly."

"How so?"

"Simply that, having the power of obtaining meat and drink, so pots and pans are required for the cooking—plates and dishes for the eating and serving thereof. When provisions were very dear, half the cottages in the kingdom were unprovided with earthenware. Now there is scarcely one that has not a small supply."

But I will endeavour as briefly as possible to give some account of those truly interesting clay-pits. "What interest in a clay-pit?" says a novel reader; "and what is clay?" Clay, I reply, is the comfort of half the homes in the world, and Purbeck clay a jewel more valuable to the people than the great diamond, 'Koh-i-noor.' Four score

out of each hundred of the passers down the street look at the china-shop and the earthenware depôt as places where their requirements in the shape of cups and saucers, mugs and pipkins, can be purchased for money. But that such articles are the produce of the bowels of the earth, obtained by the most severe labour, is a question that seldom, if ever, enters their heads, though wise they may be in their allotted stations. Some may, nevertheless, not be uninterested if I tell what I heard and what I saw on that oppressively hot day.

Having driven a few miles on the main road, admiring Corfe Castle in the distance, we diverged on a sort of beaten track over a common or heathered waste, then halted, and descended. Still I beheld neither pits or clay, and consequently began to fancy that these so-called clay pits of Purbeck must be 'will-o'-the-wisps,' or some enchanted holes in the earth, from which I expected to see a legion of imps issue with baskets of the precious earth on their backs; but as we walked forward, somewhat subdued by the heat, the scene shifted, and all at once I beheld before me the far-famed Purbeck Pits. Pits forsooth they were—broad enough, deep enough and wide enough, to have buried a division of the Russian army. Fancy yourself, reader, standing on a vast open

moor or undulating heather land—some thousands of acres being unearthed as it were—that is, the surface cleared away in many places, some ten, others twenty, others forty feet deep, till the veins or platforms of clay are approached, which run much as do veins of coal in coal pits; then fancy some scattered hundreds of remarkably athletic and dark-coloured men—dark from constant exposure to the air from childhood—who are using large heavy implements somewhat in the form of narrow long spades, but of such weight that to lift one is no ordinary accomplishment. With these, and the aid of water, they remove the clay in large squares like blocks of Bath stone, which are thence conveyed by a tram-road, some miles, to the wharf, where they are shipped for exportation. This is a simple idea of an open pit: but there are others beneath the earth's surface which are worked precisely as are coal-pits. I may here observe that the whole of this vast wild plain—so peculiarly situated by God's goodness for the means of exportation—is supposed to be embowelled with the precious clay. It requires, however, a practical knowledge both of the locality as of the nature of the surface, to ascertain where the treasure lies; for although it is clearly to be supposed that clay there generally is in the neighbourhood, a peculiar pit is often worked

out, or only productive of bad clay, while some is remarkably deep below the surface, and in other places within a few yards of it. The manner of ascertaining the best clay is by the simple mode of boring with a long rod having a cork-screw end, to which it adheres, thus proving the depth below the surface, as also the quality, which differs greatly even in the same pit. A platform or layer often appears scarcely worth the working, were it not for the value of that below; thus one portion is used for what is termed 'pipe-clay,' and for the production of common earthenware, whereas the finer portion is mixed for china and the better sort of delf. Neither are the clays under the same surface of the same colour. The white or light clay is the best; the leaden-coloured clay comes next; and I also observed and carried away portions of a beautiful rose colour, and even yellow. Indeed it was a most interesting sight; and notwithstanding the weather, which became dense and more dense, I lingered long in this region of clay.

But there are other pits in addition to those belonging to the gentlemen who so kindly escorted me; and in proof that it is not a mere question of throwing up earth and digging clay, I may add that I also visited another extensive range of pits scarcely seen till approached, on which many thou-

sands of pounds have been and are being expended in the mere hope of discovering some productive and valuable clay. Powerful steam-engines were erected in the centre of the pit to carry off the water, and also offices and a residence for the foreman.

Having passed some hours up to our very heads in clay, we took our places, much to my satisfaction, in a primitive carriage—being nothing more or less than a truck in which straw and sacks had been kindly placed for our accommodation; and thus most comfortably we sat and, unaided by steam power or horse-power, we rolled at a pleasant pace two miles down a gently-inclined plane, till we reached the wharf, where I witnessed the loading of many large barges employed to convey the raw material to vessels, which carry it to the ports of Liverpool, &c., as to many a foreign shore.

As we thus comfortably reclined in our truck, one of my companions, alluding to the Great Exhibition, quaintly observed as to what might be the feelings of Prince Albert if similarly situated, when I replied:—

"Even crowned heads have been in far worse carriages. Yet I question if his Royal Highness would object even to a seat in a truck to witness that which you have so kindly enabled me to see

this day—his heart is so entirely devoted to all things tending to the progress of the age, as to the benefits of the working classes. And as for myself, I shall henceforth look on an earthenware pitcher or a jug of delf with the same veneration as on a piece of Dresden china."

After viewing all matters connected with the exportation of clay, the dog-cart again met us and we returned to Wareham. A hasty dinner over, I proceeded once more to fight the battle of industry in the Town Hall—a bloodless victory, which terminated in such peace and enthusiasm and good-will that I trust the clay of Purbeck may take its place among the raw products of this great nation, and prove not the least valuable article in the Exhibition, while Purbeck marble retains its place as of yore—fitting for the erection of magnificent edifices dedicated to God.

CHAPTER XII.

In conclusion I may say to those who may perchance to visit the towns of their native land in order to ascertain the feelings and opinions of the public mind in reference to any great national undertaking, whether it be of vast and lasting importance or of mere temporary consideration to the multitude—how strange and varied are the sentiments expressed, if not in all cases absolutely entertained! So was it in reference to the Great Exhibition of Industry, more particularly in its early stages. Many eulogized the noble idea at once, and pronounced it admirable and grand, tending to benefit the world at large, and the people of this great nation in particular; while others derided, 'pooh-poohed,' and ridiculed, if

not absolutely abused, and denounced the whole matter as a mere theoretical absurdity, utterly beyond all human power to realize; while a third party, in language by no means courteous, indeed bordering on rude vulgarity, declared the whole undertaking as an unmitigated humbug, emanating from causes existing only in enthusiastic imaginations, and never to be carried out; whereas a fourth party, wary as our brethren far north, said with intended prudence—

"Wait a wee bit, till we see how this great idea is brought to maturity; and if so be it succeed, then we will assist."

Alas! what ennobling generosity!

Visit with me a few towns in the county of Wiltshire—for instance, Salisbury—a loyal city, whose chief magistrate had dined with his hospitable official brother in the great metropolis and there beheld the consort of his sovereign and heard the noble sentiments which fell from his lips.

On the subject of the Great Exhibition being named to him, he at once called a public meeting of his townsmen and the neighbourhood, and as chairman energetically aided in passing resolutions in approval of the vast undertaking. A committee was also formed, and slight subscriptions raised. Enthusiasm, however, on the subject, there was

little or none; in fact, nine-tenths of the persons who gathered there doubtless came as a mere matter of curiosity, as would they have attended any other meeting having reference to any other object—good, bad, or indifferent; the price of corn and the so-called abomination of Free Trade, as the annihilation of all free-traders, being the one and only question uppermost in their thoughts and nearest to their hearts. And yet let any man—a native of this fair land, or a visitor from foreign shores—ride from Devizes across the vast and treeless plain to Salisbury, and he will witness (with slight deviation of route to explore the unaccountable wonders of Stonehenge) the incontrovertible fact that those who are first and foremost to deplore the benefits which the will of God has permitted the Legislature to bestow on the poorer classes of this country have the least cause for so doing. Cast the eye on all sides and you will witness homestead and homestead filled with magnificent ricks of untouched grain, the growth of a harvest not only long past, but o'ertopping rich acres on acres corn land far advanced again in preparation for the sickle. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that throughout the length and breadth of "merrie England" there are few such wealthy tenant farmers as those who live on the rich land and own

the magnificent flocks which feed on the sweet herbage of these wide-spreading downs in thousands.

Return to Devizes—a pleasant, flourishing market town, well-built, well-watered, and abundantly provided. Long had the subject of the world-wide Exhibition of Industry been read of, spoken of, praised by the majority, abused by the minority, and known to all thinking men from the snow-clad vales of Russia to the burning plains of India, ere its inhabitants, within two hours of the scene of its birth, as probably of its abiding for years to come, had awakened from their lethargy on so grand a subject. For a season indeed they held back, immoveable. And why so? Solely that the tradesmen are principally supported by the neighbouring agriculturists, and the neighbouring agriculturists, are dead against anything good, bad or indifferent, that may or might occur for the benefit of their fellow-men or the world at large, unless in their wisdom (and I say it with no intended discourtesy) they clearly in the distance discover positive advantage to them individually, instead of, as erroneously supposed, injury.

Ideas ill-becoming the yeomen of England, usually so generous, bold and free! They told the tradesmen to beware of the trap, though forsooth

that trap might be baited by a Prince—more noble as a man than aught that worldly distinction can make him; and they, good men, listened and were ready to believe that pence in hand coming from whatever quarter were realities, though only copper ones, far better than a Crystal Palace—a sort of dream as distant, and for aught they knew to the contrary as unreal to their imaginations, as the Palace of the Alhambra, and to be as little estimated.

Yet happily in that clean and apparently peaceful country town there live a few good men and true—men with heads containing knowledge and thought, which knowledge and thought, granted by a wise Providence, they use unreservedly and most beneficially both for their fellow-townsmen as for the public generally; and with hearts withal which induced them to give some portion of their zeal, which, however unproductive to themselves, they judged, and judged I doubt not wisely, would fall with some slight ray of sunshine on those who laboured around them. And thus, although the summer had waned, and winter had set her unflowered garb on the land, and even the eventful year of 1851 was well-nigh at hand, as they daily heard that the splendid edifice of man's genius, now perfected and unrivalled, was rapidly towering

towards the sky, and that their brothers from foreign lands were preparing to unfurl their banners on the peaceful battle-field of industry and art in Old England, they went forth and instilled generous facts, instead of selfish theories, into the minds of those with whom their life's labours were associated, and thus the clouds of indecision, mystery and misconception at length dispersed. Few became so truly enthusiastic in a cause which apparently at first they denounced with as much distaste as were the Crystal Palace building a summer residence for the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman, or "the Bull."

Pass with me onwards over another portion of the great Wiltshire plain to the ancient and right royal borough of Marlborough. There loyalty and art, industry and labour, were words which called on all men to buckle on their armour and hasten to the battle-field.

No sooner the subject of the Exhibition mentioned, than his worship the mayor, with a laudable desire to ascertain the sentiments of the inhabitants in reference to their Prince, the Exhibition, and all in connection with it, was all heart in the undertaking; so much so indeed, that the measures he took, most honourable to himself and just as regards his position, brought down on him the thunder of a few not so eager or so loyal in a

good cause. But their thunder was like a school-boy's pop-gun or a six-penny cannon, which having exploded killed nobody. So day by day the Palace rose in spite of them.

And now doubtless, though having nothing paid and nothing to pay but the shilling for entrance, they will not, I hope, be the last amongst the admiring millions who gather there when the weather is somewhat more cheerful than on this 19th night of March and the sunshine of May warms their hearts.

His worship was a kind and cheerful gentleman, of no considerable "corporeal" importance, which somehow or another—and he will pardon me—from my very infancy I had hitherto believed to be one of the qualifications for mayoralty, at least till it so occurred that the Great Exhibition brought me into friendly communication with many kind and courteous gentlemen holding this truly honourable position, as chosen by their fellow-townsmen. I confess I never even dreamed of a mayor but as an individual of vast rotundity and crimson physiognomy, probably that my early associations naturally connected the office with turtle and venison, sirloins and old port; and all these gastronomic indulgences tend, or I err, to increase "the human form Divine." But the wise reforms, so far as they

have gone in corporations, as in many other things in town and country, have unceremoniously put an end, I fancy, to the importations of turtle, reduced the corporation kitchen ranges, and emptied the cellars; and thus I found, among the chief magistrates with whom it was my good fortune and pleasure to become acquainted, men of all calibres, positions and acquirements; and he of Marlborough, though doubtless in heart as in hospitality right worthy of his calling, was, like the Prime Minister of this great kingdom, and the illustrious hero Nelson—and I may venture to assert it in such good company—a light weight. Moreover, he entered at once into the subject of the world's Exhibition with a spirit worthy of all honour; and having informed me that he had taken his place at the great historical banquet in London in the full costume of his office, which as regards Marlborough is black, he proposed at once to give public notice to the inhabitants that on a day appointed a meeting would be held in their ancient Town Hall, then and there to discuss its merits; and with much cordiality we parted.

Now Marlborough is a glorious name, calling back to military minds recollections of those victories, never to be forgotten, of Blenheim, Mal-

plaquet and Ramillies, and possibly, to the minds of some in the days we live, the undeniable fact that all those glories, untoward or not, drew some millions from the pockets of the people of England. Yet neither the high-sounding name of the place itself nor the shadow of those glories past can rightly convey to those who have never been there any very pleasing idea of the place itself. For all that it is well worthy of a visit. Two of its principal objects of interest I shall at once name—the modern house of learning, and the modern home of Christian charity—implying simply, in plain words, the Marlborough College and the Union.

To visit these I was kindly conducted by Sir Erasmus Williams, the high-minded and amiable rector of the town—the friend of those who want, and the firm advocate of liberality rightly understood in spirit as by act. And while I am free to confess that my visit to the latter caused me unmitigated pleasure, from the order, comfort and cleanliness which reigned throughout, so evident as almost to obliterate the feelings of commiseration which naturally arise on witnessing many an able-bodied fellow-creature unwillingly necessitated to remain within its walls, yet if all such establishments be

similar in character, organisation and comfort to that of Marlborough, the highest credit is due to the administrators of the law, as to those by them selected to grant those best of blessings to the houseless and the poor—food and shelter—and to the aged and infirm pauper the peace of a quiet, if not a chosen, home.

Turn to the former institution. Walk with me through the corridors and chambers of this seat of youth's tuition, and witness the accommodation alike of master as of pupil. I will not in this light work endeavour to weary my readers, many of whom, in morning gown and slippers, with possibly the addition of a narcotic in the shape of a cheeroot to assist the interest I have failed in creating, will pass rapidly over my pages ere preparing for more important daily duties, by any detailed account of the foundation and rise of this great establishment, which I ought to term a College. I desire to say nothing discourteously of its enormous cost. I speak of it as it is, and as it will remain, as far as architectural beauty is concerned—a monument unworthy the object of its erection, as alike a glaring red brick-offering to the vile taste of its designers.

At the south-west entrance to this ancient town,

on the direct high road from the metropolis to Devizes, there stood in the days when railways were not, a handsome large hotel, well known to thousands who have travelled from London to Bath. To this hotel was attached a very beautiful garden. In fact it was in days not long since one of those public abiding-places where newly-married couples were wont to pass a week, retired from the busy world, in wandering amid Flora's charms, repeating to each other their first fond feelings of love while listening to the notes of the nightingale; or where lordly and rich luxurious travellers were wont to halt for the night on their road to the west. The sitting-rooms were large and splendidly furnished, with bed-rooms in keeping, while the *cuisine*, as all other departments, was well ordered—the latter with that all-necessary acquisition, an admirable "pot au feu." Consequently at all times and all hours the traveller was well served.

But, as I have observed, although the thunder of the Great Western was then scarcely heard, it came rattling onwards, railway pace, and in its course, though not actually passing through the town, approached sufficiently near to bury in its ashes that which was once one of England's most agreeable of hotels. For a period the house and its

surrounding evergreens stood tenantless, deserted and disconsolate. No longer the smoke issued from its immense kitchen range; well-attired waiters, standing at the portico to receive the fair, elegantly-attired and delicate ladies who were wont to issue from the well-cushioned chariots of "Peters," rattled up to the door by four smoking posters, were, as individuals, vanished from the land. The glory of the town was gone. Passers-by who recollected what had been, looked on and thought of their youth, blending in their imagination the scenes of joyous life, hilarity and hospitality which had passed within those massive walls, recollecting that in the current events of life palaces not seldom become prisons for spendthrifts, as have churches been converted into bivouacs for armies in the field.

'Tis not unfitting, therefore, that the abode of temporary splendour, passing wit, love-passes, and refined gastronomy, should at last have been fixed on by some wise man of the west and turned into a seat of learning. So is it. Pity 'tis. 'Tis true, however, that although the ancient hostelry still stands, it is the only portion of the building that the eye of art can look on without deploring the waste of money which has converted that which

might have been an ornament to the country into a miserable model for a Union-house, and the house of God thereunto attached into a half popish, half cathedral, half chapel, house of prayer, with neither exterior beauty nor interior convenience.

On the Professors it is not for me to comment. I believe the head-master to be a Christian gentleman and a scholar; and as regards the system of education, it may be admirable for aught I know to the contrary.

The apartments awarded to the under-masters, however, are in my humble opinion, inferior to very many barrack-rooms provided for subalterns of the army; while those allotted to the pupils are by no means what they ought to be, considering the outlay; and had it not been suggested by the amiable and reverend gentleman to whom I have previously alluded, as desirable that a high balustrade should be placed as a protection to the ill-constituted staircases, the necks of the pupils would be in constant jeopardy, to the extent of some dozens. The kitchen department, of all I saw, was alone worthy of commendation; and while I would hope, for the sake of the growing lads, that cooks and provisions are equally worthy of praise, I would greatly desire that the Exhibition of 1851 may produce some

architectural specimen of art leading to a new era in the taste of this great nation.

So much for the Marlborough College. Of its interior economy I know nothing; of its scholastic system, less; of its Directors, only what is publicly asserted, and my eyes verified, that they have spent a vast sum of money on a frightfully ugly and inconvenient building, which fact in itself is a disadvantage to the town, inasmuch as, had it been one worthy of the nation, thousands would have gathered there to behold it.

To the subject of the Exhibition of Industry of 1851, the Collegiaus, as the Professors, gave all due admiration, attention and support, showing alike their good sense as their good taste. To the Rector of Marlborough, Sir Erasmus Williams, I am much indebted, both for courteous attention as for his untiring zeal in aid of so good a cause; and I must admit, with few exceptions—and I have no right to question their tastes or opinions—so did the inhabitants of Marlborough, who, though not over-burdened, I imagine, by excitement or festivities, have doubtless the good of their fellow-men at heart.

There was one gentleman whom I recently met, who, on my naming the approaching inauguration

of the Great Exhibition, exclaimed with a loud voice:

"If it were in the next field, I would not visit it."

Some may say he is not a curious man. I humbly submit he is a curious man; but he is not from Marlborough.

A few remarks in reference to Chippenham, a pleasant market town of Wiltshire, watered by the winding Avon—a station of the Great Western railway, on the direct line from London to Exeter. In former years manufactories of cloth and silk offered abundant occupation to its inhabitants. In these we live there still remain one or more in recollection of the past, and for the present adding much to the benefit of the town and its people. Otherwise, it may be strictly denominated a stone-built town of repose, void of enthusiasm outwardly apparent. But for all that, if my practical information, and opinion grounded on the voice of the public, be correct—as bitter in political partisanship, as bigotted in political election—in fact, a borough well-nigh as rotten—as was that of Old Sarum in benighted times. What then? As the good people who there live and die appear to be satisfied, what cause have I, or any wanderer in the land we live

in, to be dissatisfied? Certainly not, on the principle that it is uncourteous to meddle with the affairs of one's neighbour. And yet 'tis passing strange that some thousands of reasoning but unreasonable men should be content that wealth should legislate for them, and the building with that wealth a town hall or a market-place—very desirable additions unquestionably to a country town—should constitute all that to them appears requisite to grant to one man uncontradicted authority,—that is, as regards the majority,—over a legion, both as to act and opinion, local and political.

His Worship the Mayor for the year of our Lord 1850, and for all I know to the contrary for that of 1851—doubtless a most admirable administrator of the law—was knee-deep in the mysteries of draining a new farm, and superintending the building of a new farm-house thereon, when I had the honour of suggesting the advantages that might possibly accrue to Old England, to the manufactories of Chippenham in particular, and to the inhabitants in general, by their taking a generous part in promoting the success of the Great Exhibition of Industry. His Worship (who seemed to be much interested in the architectural beauties of his new abode, which day by day rose before

his eyes,) had nevertheless no admiration for a Crystal Palace in perspective, notwithstanding the genius of Paxton or the unequalled labours of those who have so faithfully, with the hand of labour and art, brought forth in fact before the world that which his mind alone had then seen in its glory. Moreover he was a dealer in corn, and possibly a lover of dear bread, as some have declared; and, without discourtesy, I have no right to disbelieve them.

He judged the noble scheme might benefit the million, but it would not tend to benefit him individually; and the million in comparison to self is *nil*. So he satisfied himself with saying, doubtless, as he looked on his new abode, "This is the house that Jack built;" and what Jack says, so say I; and what Jack thinks, I am bound to believe, save in the matter of high rents.

But the inhabitants, or at least the minority of them, were not quietly disposed to stand and look on with their hands in their breeches-pockets because other men cried "Beware of the mummery of Free-traders and Free Trade," though such noble-minded men as Lord Stanley is among the number of the Exhibition Committee. Moreover, they thought, and read, and believed, and saw,

not only all the 'good men and true' of England, but half of Europe and the world, fighting zealously the battle of industry. So they considered for themselves, unbiassed by the opinions of others, and undictated to by the aristocracy of wealth. This done, they called on a lecturer to give them some explanation as to the intentions of the Royal Commissioners and the merits of the forthcoming Exhibition. And thus, with minds expanded and hearts warmed in so good a cause as labour, they set too right merrily. And who knows but that the quiet little town of Chippenham may carry away a banner of merit from the battle-field?

In stating that his Worship the then Mayor of Chippenham had no taste for the Great Exhibition of Industry I mean him no personal discourtesy. Having an opinion, he was perfectly right in maintaining it. I only hope that he may visit the scene, and admit that he was in error. He has a brother, if I err not, a yeoman of England, loyal and true,—moreover a right good sportsman and a generous man, who not only loves to enter into the good old English sport of fox-hunting, but if so be that the hounds perchance to come to a check near to his domicile, Old English hospitality such as was met with in days 'lang syne' is most

liberally bestowed on all. It is impossible to say what good such men do in a country; and I should like a few of them sent up to the Exhibition as specimens of what the English yeomanry were, and as many happily still are, and, I would fain hope, will ever remain.

THE END.

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